HELIONDÉ;

OR,

ADVENTURES IN THE SUN.

BY

SYDNEY WHITING, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

"THE MEMOIRS OF A STOMACH," "A LITERARY MELANGE," &c. &c.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo:

LUCRETIUS, lib. iv.

Ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον

ARIS. *Nubes*, 225

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[*The Author reserves to himself the right of translation.*]

DEDICATION

TO

SIR DAVID BREWSTER,

K.H., D.C.L., F.R.S., ETC.

My dear Sir David,

When I requested you to honour me by accepting the dedication of this work, I was aware that, as a mere novelist, I should be addressing a powerful though involuntary rival; for every discovery you have made in science, every truth you have propounded in philosophy, every light you have cast on the religious, moral, or material world, has appeared in form so alluring as to have invaded the dominion of Fiction, and surpassed the attractions of Romance.

I have endeavoured, however, in the present volume to add a little ballast to its flights of imagination; and with this object. scattered through its pages will be found many gleanings from the physical sciences, so that its weightiest and most valuable portions are gathered from those numerous departments of human knowledge which you have illumined by your genius, and enriched by your research.

Upon these grounds, therefore, the following pages are, by your kind permission, inscribed to you, as a token of unaffected admiration, by,

My dear Sir David,

Yours, ever faithfully and obliged,

SYDNEY WHITING.

PAPER BUILDINGS,
TEMPLE.

PREFACE.

In the following narrative, while conveying the reader to a new world,[1] and exciting his imagination by the novel matters therein, I have endeavoured, at least in all the descriptive passages, continually to bring him back to the real wonders around him,

[1] The most fertile invention can but conceive new combinations: to *create*, in the pure sense of the word, is, to human intellect, impossible. The astronomer Bessel (as quoted in the "Plurality of Worlds") declared that those who imagined inhabitants in the moon and planets, supposed them, in spite of all their protestations, as like to men as one egg is to another.

so that the love of the marvellous may become tempered with the necessity of learning home truths, illustrating, in fact, as far as I am able, the ideal and visionary, by the aid of the real and substantial.

In the physical world it has become a question, for how long a period have multitudes walked on auriferous soil with unbounded wealth a few feet below them, in ignorance of the hidden ore which required but exertion to discover, crush, and refine? and in the moral world the question may be asked, how long have folk been possessed of golden truths lying near the surface of their every-day course, without knowing that by energy and investigation they might possess them?

I do not for a moment flatter myself that in the following work I have turned up much of the pure metal; but I do trust I have laid bare many little specimens from the

treasures of knowledge, which may induce people—and especially young people—to dig for themselves into the soil of Nature's wonders, and to bring to light many of the riches yet unknown to them in the regions of science, art, or literature.

I can assert with truth, and I am sure the best writers of the day will corroborate the statement, that the most difficult part in writing a work purely of imagination is to discipline that faculty, which is too apt to become flighty, and to take refuge in obscurity[1]—a sure symptom of the confusion and overthrow of the intellect. In the endeavour to avoid being obscure, I fear I may occasionally have indulged in descriptions too minute, but it is better to be understood too well, than not understood at all.

[1] "The painful fashion of obscurity of verse has come up in late years, and is marring and misleading a quantity of useful talent."—MACAULAY.

Another blemish which I fear may be found in this volume is, that I very often quote facts from natural philosophy, and passages from authors, well known to the man of science and to the scholar; but the students by the light of nature, or by the lamp of literature, should remember, that abroad there exists a lamentable ignorance of the commonest facts in physiology. If, therefore, I have erred in this particular, I can only offer as my excuse, or add to the fault, by avowing that I did so advisedly; since I conceive that it is better for those who know a fact to read it twice, than that those who know it not, should remain in ignorance.

I have no doubt, however, that the reading world, if it read this Sun Story at all, will very soon discover its lights and shades, without any indication on my part; but may be, it possesses neither the one nor the

other, but is a mere Icarian effort, whose author deserves to perish in the calm but deep sea of indifference.

Possibly the piquant satire of Lucillius, in "The Greek Anthology," may be appropriate:

"Menestratus riding on an ant, as on an elephant, was stretched, unlucky fellow, unexpectedly on his back; and being kicked, says, when the mortal [blow] seized him, 'Oh envious deity! thus did Phæthon, riding, likewise perish.'"

If, therefore, "Heliondé" turn out a flea instead of even a small elephant, and myself prove a Menestratus, I shall exclaim, in the language of the Roman Poet, "Mentullus strives to climb the Pimplæan mountain; the Muses pitch him down headlong with forks."

I must request the general reader to con-

sider this somewhat dry exordium to a light narrative, as a heavy prelude to a "Fairy extravaganza," and the masks having spoken amidst gloomy scenery, the change here ensues, and the scene shifts to the illuminated palaces of the city of the Sun.

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HELIONDÉ;

OR,

ADVENTURES IN THE SUN.

CHAPTER I.

THROUGH SPACE TO HELIOPOLIS.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE—USEFUL DIGRESSION—STELLAR RELATIONSHIP—PARALLEL WONDERS—CHRISTABEL—LOVE—THE HIPPOGRIFF—ILLNESS—SLEEP IN THE SUNSHINE—TRANSFORMATION INTO TENUITY—PASSAGE THROUGH SPACE—DELIGHTS THEREOF—SAGE REFLECTIONS—SOLAR TERMINUS—ARRIVAL AT THE SUN.

A DRIVE through the regions of space, occasionally stopping for a few days at the different orbs of the Heavens; an aërolite for your car; the horses of the Sun for your team; Apollo your Jehu; Saturn with his belts to stand up behind; a comet for your

avant courier; Venus your companion; Ceres and Hebe to welcome you with curtsies at the various hotels of the sky; feathers from the wings of moulting angels for your couch; Aurora to call you in the morning; a symphony of musical spheres while you dress; an omelette from Cygnus, and a draught from the milky way for your breakfast; a stroll over some Nephelococcygia,[1] especially if the sun shines; and then a fresh start for remote worlds through the illimitable fields of ether;—all this would certainly present many features of novelty in the way of travelling, but, unfortunately, I have not such a journey to describe.

It, however, falls to my lot to have sojourned in a planet which, while regarded by us terrestrial mortals with more interest than any other, is not only an *ignis incognitus*, but we are even ignorant whether it be inhabited, or whether it is a huge lamp,

[1] "A cloud-built city" would doubtless present a beautiful appearance flooded in sunlight; but on a wet day—Eheu!

882,000 miles in diameter,[1] hung in the centre of space to impart light to certain circumambient worlds.

It is not my intention to examine the opinions upon this subject of either Rothman, Kepler, Gilbert, Digges, Origanus, Galileo, Laplace, Lagrange, Newton, Arago, or Herschel; nor will I resort to the dogmas of Aristarchus, Hipparchus, Ptolemeus, Albategnius, Alfraganus, Tycho Brahè, Rœmerus, Rœslinus, Frascatorius, Copernicus, Clavius, or Maginus; but this I may say, that in respect to the planets being inhabited, Tycho Brahè, in his epistles, indirectly expresses a belief that they *are* inhabited; so, also, Kepler supposed; while Thomas Campanella, a Calabrian monk, agreed in the same notion.

[1] The above diameter is according to Sir John Herschel. Among the ancients, Heraclitus contended that the sun's diameter was a single foot; Anaxagoras, that it was as large as the country of Peloponnesus; Anaximander, that it was the size of the earth; Macrobius, that it was eight times as large; Eratosthenes, that it was seven-and-twenty times; Hipparchus, upwards of a hundred times; and Possidonius, nearly sixty thousand times! Plato and Cicero, Epicurus and Lucretius, declared they knew nothing whatever of the sun's dimensions.

and laboured hard to prove it.[1] A journey to the great luminary—a sort of Hegira from Earth to the Sun—enables me to affirm that the opinions of the latter gentlemen I have named were quite correct; and furthermore I discovered, that although the physical combinations of the sun present the most opposite features to our own, yet that there exist many characteristics, both geographically and ethnologically considered, similar to those which distinguish the earth.[2] In-

[1] Among the moderns (says Dr. Long), Huygens has written a treatise which he calls Cosmotheoros. He peoples the planets with reasonable creatures, but he insists upon their being in all respects similar to the human race.

Sir David Brewster, in his eloquent reply to Whewell's Plurality of Worlds, says: "But setting aside the ungainly creations of mythology, how many *probable* forms are there of beauty, and activity, and strength, which even the painter, the sculptor, and the poet could assign to the physical casket in which the diamond spirit may be enclosed; how many *possible* forms are there, beyond their invention, which eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived?"

[2] The hypothesis that all the members of the solar system possess similar constitutions to that of the earth, is founded upon the fact that *no new elements* have been discovered in meteoric stones, which are supposed to be fragments from other worlds. "They contain the ordinary materials of earth, but associated in a manner altogether new." (*Vide* Vestiges of Creation, p. 41.)

deed, experience has proved to me that all nature is homogeneous, and that the wonderful phases which she exhibits are the result of one principle, one idea, one end, one aim When some diminutive star, far, far beyond our own system, sends its feeble light through the lens of the astronomer's telescope, it is a greeting of relationship, and a recognition of family ties. Combination is one of Nature's great secrets, and the extraordinary cities of the Sun are, relatively speaking, no more marvellous than the cells of the bee,[1] the hillock of the ant, or the nest of the smallest bird. The vast amount of light it imparts is not more astonishing than the soft glimmer of the glowworm guiding

[1] The economy of Nature is one of her most wonderful features. The cell of the bee, simple as it seems, is formed in hexagonal figures, the hexagon permitting a greater saving of material than any other geometrical figure. Mrs. Somerville tells us that there is not a particle of the finer vegetable mould that has not passed through the intestines of a worm preparing it for the germination of seed. (Phy. Geo. vol. ii. p. 43.) The same author declares "there is probably not a drop of water on the earth's surface but what has been borne on the wings of the wind." How exquisite a work might be made from the poetry of physical facts, but the combination of a scientific and poetical mind is extremely rare.

her liege lord to bowers of bliss, the while he disports himself in the summer air.[1]

It requires, I acknowledge, no small stretch of the imaginative powers to grapple simultaneously with the maxima and minima, for we are ever prone to judge effects by the relation they bear to our senses. Habit reconciles us to all the miracles of life which are in perpetual activity around us, and to excite wonder it is necessary to move from out the

[1] The female glowworm alone possesses the electric light, and the male is a beetle—a sort of entomological Leander, lighted by his Hero through the waves of air.

If the word "wave" be objected to as an "audacious catachresis," I must refer the reader to Sir John Herschel's Astronomy, where he calls it an "aërial ocean;" or, if this authority be insufficient, to an elegant line of Manilius:

"Ipsa natat tellus, pelagi lustrata coronâ
Cingentis medium liquidis amplexibus orbem."

"Earth swims herself, enfolded by the main
That clasps her bosom in his liquid arms;"

or Shakspeare, thus:

"The sea of air;"

or Cowley:

"Where birds with painted oars did ne'er
Row through the trackless ocean of the air;"

or Cowper:

"Tell me ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms."

sphere of well-known phenomena. Natural[1] marvels please only the few; unnatural ones possess charms for the multitude. The bubble of table-turning required to be punctured by Faraday before it collapsed, but not until it had been received as a truth in every capital in the civilised world.

These observations are necessary to prepare the reader for the perusal of my narrative, and to dilute, as it were, the strength of his astonishment at the wonders in the Sun, by recalling him for a moment to the wonders around him.

With the Theologasters, in Burton's Digression of Air, I can safely exclaim, "I shall

[1] The butcher-bird supplying his own larder, and skewering his victims, the honey-birds, upon thorns, with their bosoms turned upward; the cuttle-fish (like an author who, by obscurity, hopes to elude criticism) escaping its enemies by the ejection of a black fluid—a fact known to Aristophanes, which he refers to in "the clouds;" the bee, as the love-bearer of the flowers, carrying parcels of pollen one to the other, and paid for his pains by honey and odour; the ants forming bridges of their own bodies for their comrades to pass over, unheeding whether they themselves perish in the stream;—these, and a thousand other well-known facts, are as strange as though a table did turn; but superstition is needed to whet the appetite for the supernatural.

now enter upon a bold and memorable exploit; one never before attempted in this age; I shall explain this day's (night's) transactions in the Sun (Moon), a place where no one has arrived save in his dreams."

Be it understood, however, I did not soar into the regions of air like Icaromenippus in Lucian. Nor did I ascend in a basket swung from the heavens, as is recorded in the Persian tales. Nor did I fly from Crete and perish in the sea like the son of Dædalus. Nor did I ride through the air like Abaris on his arrow. Nor, as Pythagoras, did I retire into the worlds of departed spirits, laden with hyperborean wonders. Nor, like the Jewish Talmudists, did I *guess* what goes on above. Nor did I ascend, like Mahomed in the Turks' Alcoran, upon a Pegasus sent on purpose. Nor did I shoot out of a volcano in form of scoriæ, and, being impelled beyond the earth's attraction, become lost in the sun's gravitation. Nor, like the Turk in Busbequius, will I pretend I can make wings and fly. No, gracious reader, the manner of

my reaching the glorious regions of eternal light happened as follows.

It so chanced, that in the vigour of youth I was attacked by so severe a malady, that, after trying every remedy that human ingenuity could devise, I was recommended, as a last resource, to test the curative powers of an hydropathic establishment. I did so, and this trifling event resulted in the most astounding transmigration that ever fell to the lot of man.

The cause of my illness is rather of an interesting nature, because it touches a chord of sympathy in old and young, and old and young will agree with me in this, when I confess that my malady was love. Yes, it so fell out that I devoted myself to one of those pretty, tender, soft, and coaxing creatures who frequent the continents of our planet, sharing with the animal called man the evil and the good of life; who congregate with others of the species in cities and towns, and who dress themselves in various manners, according to fashion and fancy. The generic

term for these interesting beings is "woman," but the especial one upon whom I hung such sentiments and affections as I possessed, was called by the somewhat romantic name of Christabel, and to my unsophisticated ideas there was no other Christabel in the wide world, or, if there were, none comparable to my particular Christabel, in the texture of her skin, the grace of her movements, the bloom of her cheek, the moisture of her lip, the roundness of her form, and the general sweetness of her nature. In the eccentric excess or extravagance of imagination, I used to compare her to a beautiful harp, whose strings were her luxuriant hair when loosened to the wind; whose pedals were her tiny feet; whose sounds were the sweet tones of her musical voice, while the chord in which she was set was the dominant one of goodness. To possess this living instrument of nature's best choosing, and to evoke the melody of love from its sweet attunement, was my ambition, my hope, and almost my only desire in life. I loved her without one

atom of conventionality mixed with the feeling, and I declare I never once thought of her fortune, nor of the externals of her life, nor of the particular sort of crenoline, or muslin, or silk, or satin which she chose to wear over her dainty self;—no, I loved her as a little human being cast on this crust of ours on purpose to be loved; and, moreover, I loved every atom of her with all the strength of my weakness, and the weakness of my strength. Of course there were obstacles almost insurmountable to our union, but with her permission I resolved one day to wait upon the governing Hippogriff of the family, he being no less a perso than an uncle, and uncles—from nursery tales up to Richards on the throne—have ever been proverbial for terrific conduct towards their brothers' and sisters' children. The conversation which ensued, though of a confidential nature, is too full of example to be lost, especially as it was the proximate cause of my astonishing solar journey.

Sir Roger de Griffin, for such was the

uncle's name, sat on one side of a library table, and I on the other. He looked placid, severe, and gentlemanly; I, modest but determined, and my half above the table very courageous, but from the waist downwards I experienced that sort of nervous trembling which every one has felt when the entire future of his life depends upon the few curt sentences passing between man and man.

"Sir," said Sir Roger de Griffin, in answer to my declaration of attachment for his niece, "I will return the candour of your confession by frankness equal to your own. Personally, there is not the shadow of an objection to your union with my niece, but since the young lady's worldly interests are confided to my care, I must confess to you, that the want on your part of a position and a secure income, is an insuperable obstacle to our accepting the honour you would confer upon our family."

I scarcely knew whether this was said

ironically or not; but I came prepared to combat a first refusal, so I replied:

"For many years, Sir Roger, I have managed by my pen to sustain the position of a gentleman, and to possess at least the external elegances of life; and why, let me ask, when an incentive to increased exertion is added to my natural desire to succeed, should success be doubtful?"

"Ill-health may overtake you," he answered; "and where, as in the professions generally, is the partner or clerk to whom, for the time, you can delegate your affairs? The creations of your brain bring you money, but are they spirits which will wait upon your bidding during sickness or sorrow?"

"True, sir," I replied; "but my health is usually excellent, and the evil you anticipate is, I hope and believe, a remote one."

"I hope so, too," said he; "and, waiving this point of objection, permit me to ask you if you soberly mean to affirm that a man without some fixed occupation, one who depends

upon the caprice of his own faculties, or, still worse, whose means fluctuate with the changes in the reading world, is in a position to involve himself in family expenses, and to take a young lady from a home of luxury to introduce her to many privations, the more unendurable because of their novelty?"

"But, Sir Roger," said I, waxing eloquent as well as a little wrathful, "let me respectfully inquire whether you utterly ignore the fact that the loss of many routine luxuries may be compensated for by being loved; and does it never suggest itself that a change from carriages and horses, routs and operas, to a life of tranquillity in a small but pretty residence, with white aprons to wait, instead of red plush to lounge, may, after all, be a change for the better?"

"The old story," said Sir Roger, wagging his head sagely—"love in a cottage. You plead with warmth now for the honeysuckle and rustic door-porch, just as, in a few years' time, when Messrs. Shortmen

and Co. have refused your last novel, you will be seeking pecuniary assistance from your nearest, if not your dearest relatives."

The whole family of the De Griffins were always proverbial for speaking the truth in a manner by no means wrapped up to disguise its ill-flavour, and this last speech of Sir Roger de Griffin, I must acknowledge, rendered me completely *hors de combat*. The bare supposition, after my numerous successes, that Messrs. Shortmen and Co. *could* possibly refuse a work from such a pen as my own, made me wince with pain; and this cruel incision being followed up by an application of caustic in his assumed belief that I should be compelled to seek aid from my relations, completed my disgust, and settled both myself and the subject of our discourse. I dared not trust myself with a reply, but I made a strong effort, and rose to depart, expressing by my compressed lips and gloomy brow the state of my mind and feelings. I suppose I not only looked disconcerted, but also extremely miserable,

for in kind accents (and the whole family of the De Griffins could be kind and gentle occasionally) he held out his hand and exclaimed:

"Go into the world, and endeavour to obtain some fixed and permanent employment, and I promise you I will raise no obstacle to your wishes. I am aware of my dear Christabel's attachment to you; but there is truth in the homely old adage, 'When want comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.'" He pressed my hand more warmly than the family of the De Griffins were wont to press hands, and the interview was ended.

The result was, I became seriously indisposed—nay, seriously ill. Books for review came tumbling in, but neither their contents nor their pages were cut up, or cut open. An article I had promised to have in readiness by a certain day, was not even began, and I flew in vain for relief to the family doctor. Dyspepsia, with his legion of blue devils, soon set in, and though everybody

prescribed for me, no relief came. Neither diet nor medicine assuaged my sufferings, and at length I was so completely drugged by the physic-giving portion of the medical community, that with a growl, sneer, and sardonic laugh, I indited "The Memoirs of a Stomach,"[1] which, instead of making medical men angry, made them my friends (and in *this* capacity they ceased to prescribe physic), the while the dear public bought the book, and the publisher was bland and smiling.

Instead of recovering, however, I became worse, and as a last resource I resolved to try "the cold water cure," so that it might extinguish the flame of my passion, and restore me to a partially charred but preserved body. With Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer Lytton's essay in my pocket, and resolution at my heart, I retreated to one of the first hydropathic establishments in England; and

[1] The Memoirs of a Stomach. Written by Himself, that all who eat may read. Edited by a Minister of the Interior. Fifth Edition.

in this place occurred that extraordinary metamorphosis which, if described by Ovid, would transcend beyond measure all those mythical changes which that author's elegant, tender, and voluptuous pen has described, for the benefit of our young men at college, and for the good of society in general.

The first week in my new abode passed away without any remarkable event, but at the end of that period the hottest summer set in that ever perhaps occurred in this country. It was one of the good old-fashioned sort of summers—"attended by the sultry hours"—such as our ancestors experienced when the sun really did come forth falling like molten gold; when the grass was turned into hay without cutting; when brooks dried up without leave; and not a bird sang forth till the evening air braced up his little throat for song. Well, during this season of excessive heat I found the water system agreeable enough, and I drank of the fluid to such a degree that I

became almost transformed. My bones seemed to be turned into glass, my blood to water, and my veins to crystal aqueducts. Still I persevered, still I drank of the fountain, still I dabbled in the baths. The time, indeed, seemed approaching when I should be changed into a water-god, crowned by the hydropathic doctor, and installed as the "Genius of the Spring." In fact, one night I absolutely dreamed that the trans formation had taken place—but it was only a dream; and still I drank and drank, and soaked and soaked.

The summer sun increased in fierceness as the season advanced. By day scarcely a sound was heard, and the tinkle of the distant sheep-bell, as it came wafted over the meadows, was the only evidence of life. Still I drank and drank, and soaked and soaked.

It so happened, that one day, after a more than usually long ablution, I sauntered forth into the glades, and, like Endymion of old, I lay down and went to sleep. It is true

there was no moon to fall in love with me, neither did I slumber for thirty years like the shepherd of Caria; but Sol performed the part of Luna, and while I there lay, close to a bed of fragrant heliotropes,[1] hushed in the calm repose which only a water-drinker enjoys, the sun's piercing rays permeated my entire system, dissipated into vapour what little remained of the body corporate, and literally drank me up, like a thirsty soul that he is.

My feelings at the moment of dissolution it would be impossible to describe. The molecules of my body partly separated, and became thin and vaporous. Cohesion, however, still feebly existed, and, curiously enough, my sensations were by no means unpleasant. It seemed as though I were inhaling gallons of chloroform, and the process of attenuation produced a sort of half-dreamy, half-voluptuous feeling, similar to

[1] Heliotropium, from ἥλιος, the sun, and τροπη, a turning or inclination, because, says Dioscorides, it turns its leaves round with the setting sun.

that which the hatchis-eaters are said to experience. How long this sort of distillation lasted I know not, but at length I arose, like the genius out of the brass vessel of the fisherman, a form of vapour yet in mortal shape, and I was drawn upward through the air by that inexorable power which had changed me into an exhalation, and while hurrying me towards another sphere was moulding me in a form capable of existing therein.[1]

Upward and onward I was drawn, and at the moment of emerging from the earth's atmosphere my attenuation increased, as would naturally result from leaving a resisting medium. For some period my progress was tolerably slow; but at length I approached a point in space where the earth's

[1] This metamorphosis is scarcely more wonderful than the change which the Culicidæ and other insects undergo, who, living for a certain period in one element, suddenly emerge into another, enjoying the blue air and warm sunbeams, having just before been existing in the stagnant pool or fœtid heap of manure. The well-known comparison of the Greeks in respect to the soul of man being typified by the transformation of the caterpillar, larva, and butterfly, scarcely requires alluding to, but it should be remembered that the ancients employed but one name to express the soul and butterfly.

gravitation ceased and that of the sun's commenced, and at this period I remember nothing save a confused idea of darting along a high road of molten gold, the pathway being neither more nor less than a collection of sunbeams lying in close parallel lines, presenting a brilliant vista of millions of miles, at the terminus of which was the great luminary himself, attracting me at a speed no human mind could conceive.

One peculiarity of my feelings was, I knew perfectly well whither I was bound; and although partly unconscious, I remember I experienced a sort of undefined apprehension that a terrific concussion with the sun's surface must soon occur, not guessing that the same atmospheric arrangement which prevented too sudden a change from a terrestrial to an aërial position would prevent any sudden collision with a hard substance, presuming the sun to be such. Nor was I without a natural alarm that I might be rushing toward a huge furnace of eternal fire—the great smithy or forge of creation,

perhaps—a consideration still less a matter for surprise when it is remembered that I had been early educated to believe that the sun is an igneous body.[1] I experienced, however, no change of temperature as the distance from my destination decreased, and the fact of the sun's possessing an atmosphere lessening in density in the ratio of the distance from the orb it surrounds, acted as a sort of atmospheric buffer, or graduated break. Owing, I say, to this arrangement, my approach to my journey's end was rendered easy and agreeable, and enabled me to contemplate my position with tolerable accuracy.

I had now travelled about 94,701,740 of English miles, and was therefore within a distance of 298,260 miles from the sun, and the powers of vision adapting themselves to

[1] In respect of the sun's *substance*, opinions have differed in every degree. Galileo, Newton, and Buffon, presumed him to be a mass of fire; Euler and De Lùc denying him to be light or fire in any shape; and the elder Herschel maintaining him to be an opaque body. But, more curious still, in a so-called "Treatise on the Sublime Art of Heliography," the sun is pronounced to be a body of ice!

the peculiarity of my position, the remainder of my course was one of almost delirious delight.

There, at my feet as it were, lay a vast orb, whose diameter is 111 times greater than that of the earth, and instead of exhibiting itself as a vast region of perpetual fire, its appearance, viewed from this distance, was as an enormous sphere,[1] suspended like our own planet without support in the blue heavens, and lying in the bosom of the serene illimitable, with that aspect of grand repose which Nature ever exhibits in her more stupendous efforts in creation.

My way now, was of course a descending one, and I gradually approached the termination of my wondrous journey with such sensations that only a spirit could feel, possessed of newly-awakened faculties fitting him to enjoy new combinations of creation, at the same time being by no means bereft of the curiosity of an ordinary mortal thirsting for knowledge.

[1] His powers of vision must, indeed, have been miraculous.

The man who has devoted his life to the study of Nature—who has drank deep of the draught which she has presented—who, having grouped together in his memory the marvels of her productions, both in the microcosm and in the macrocosm — who, having well-nigh exhausted the treasures of knowledge, and finds himself circumscribed, not by nature but by the comparative refusal of his senses to penetrate further—only such a man could comprehend the nature of my sensations when about to enter into a new world, the appetite for knowledge keen, and the food to satisfy it within my grasp.

The sun's aspect, now that I approached it, was no longer that of a sphere, but seemed a surface[1] composed of such physical conformations as would render its in-

[1] To estimate the proportion of an area visible from an elevation, we must have recourse to the geometry of the sphere, which informs us that the convex surface of a spherical segment is to the whole surface of the sphere to which it belongs as the versed sine, or thickness of the segment, is to the diameter of the sphere; and further, that this thickness is almost exactly equal to the perpendicular elevation of the point of sight above the surface.

habitants somewhat similar to those of the earth.

Nearer and nearer I approached, and I beheld hills and valleys, oceans and rivers.

Still I drew nearer, and gorgeous cities were beneath me.

Nearer yet, palaces brilliant with the light of a centre heat[1] were visible; so, also, pastures, and glades, and gardens, and undulations.

Nearer still, I perceived I was approaching one particular city, and at this altitude ravishing sounds and delicious perfume arose, as it were, to welcome me.

The ecstasy of physical enjoyment was now only equalled by an intellectual rapture, which seemed to enable me to converse in tones of love and admiration with the great spirit of the universe.

Still slowly down the vast plane of space I descended, and the moment at length arrived when, like an offspring of ether, I sprang from its guardian embrace, and stood be-

[1] This expression will be explained presently.

wildered and dazzled before the gates of Heliopolis, the capital of the Sun!

And here I must pause to request the reader, if he intends to follow me through my description of this wondrous abode, to call into play all the best energy of his imagination, for without this aid rendered by him I should despair of painting, even with colour from fancy's most vivid palette, the picture which is sketched on the canvas of the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUBURBS OF HELIOPOLIS.

GORGEOUS GATES OF HELIOPOLIS — CONCRETE AIR — ALUTEDON'S WELCOME — CLOUD-SPUN VESTURES — LANGUAGE — CAVERNS OF LIGHT — CURIOUS NOTES — SHUTTERS IN THE GROUND — SUN SPOTS EXPLAINED — NIGHT IN THE BRAIN — SUN AND ICE — FRESH WONDERS — HELIOCENTRIC APPEARANCE OF THE EARTH — THE SUBLIME AND RIDICULOUS — ELYTRON — FOOD — NO STOMACHS — MINICA — BED OF POT-POURRI — MUSICAL COUCH.

NOTHING I had hitherto conceived equalled in beauty the gates of Heliopolis.[1] That these were enormous beyond description no one will doubt, but it is a principle of nature

[1] Speaking of the world-famous bronze gates of Ghiberti, Michael Angelo declared they were worthy of being the doors of Paradise; but bronze and solidity scarcely convey the idea of an appropriate entrance to the abode of bliss. Like all beautiful works that require studying, these glorious doors will disappoint the beholder *at first*. The celebrated bronze door of Sansovino is another exquisite work, which is stated to have occupied thirty years in its construction. Models of both are to be seen in the Renaissance and Italian Courts of the Crystal Palace.

that size is lost in proportion. I myself, as I stood before these dazzling works of art, was perhaps, in relation to my former size, of colossal dimensions; but when I glanced at my own person, I could perceive nothing outrageous, for my bulk was utterly lost in the relation it bore to surrounding objects.[1]

It will be highly satisfactory for the reader to be informed at once, that so far as dress went, I was perfectly presentable to any one who might arrive, for the habiliments I wore when in the gardens of the hydropathic doctor had gone through a process similar to that of my own body, and they had adapted themselves admirably to my increased volume. Instead, however, of fitting in the usual way, they floated, in by no means ungraceful folds, around me. I

[1] Weight, *i. e.* gravitation, must determine the size of bodies, not bulk. Astronomers believe that the gravitation of the sun would make a being there weigh about two tons. This surmise is founded upon dynamic calculations—the most laborious of which the human mind is capable. People are scarcely aware of the amount of labour which a seemingly trifling fact in astronomy represents. Cairaut and Lalande performed an extraordinary exploit in calculating the perturbations of Halley's comet. "During six months," says Lalande, "we calculated from morning till night, sometimes even at meals."

scarcely heeded these matters at the moment, for the surpassing beauty of the city portals absorbed all my attention. They were made of a very curious material called minica—a substance so extensively, indeed so universally, used in Heliopolis, that I must pause for a moment to describe the method of its manufacture.

The various colours which composed the atmosphere of the sun[1] being brilliant and numerous, were, by a peculiar process, arrested under different forms of combination and at once solidified. Supposing, for a moment, that here, on earth, we were able to catch a portion of light and render it concrete, turning it at once into a fine transparent substance, that imaginary art would, in a degree, resemble the manner of forming this beautiful substance. United to the brilliancy of the purest crystal were colours of every shade, and I scarcely know to what other well-known substance to compare it,

[1] The elder Herschel surmises that the atmosphere of the sun is not less than 1843, nor more than 2765 miles high. The mountains he reckons at 300 miles in elevation.

excepting, perhaps, to a huge block of transparent ice, presuming that an Iris were entombed in the centre, permeating with her prismatic colours the entire mass.

Perhaps, however, a more correct comparison would be to compare this minica to a huge diamond, its sparkles and colours fixed indelibly;—but nothing can convey an idea of its exceeding beauty.[1]

Columns and spars of this substance rose up high into the air, while arcs of the same passed transversely over them. These, again, were fastened by bands of an amethyst tint, united by huge clasps of a sort of opal-minica. The panels of these gates were composed of white slabs of concrete air, from the centre of which pencils of dazzling light radiated, casting an additional lustre over the entire structure. But whence came the light which cast its bright rays upon all things? The Sun was surely not lit by a sun? And here was I, in the very orb which illumes a vast system, wondering by what possible arrangement it, itself, was illumined.

[1] See note, p. 63

On this important subject I will speak presently; for while I was lost in amazement at all I saw, the gates of the Sun flew open, and an individual at the head of a body of aborigines advanced and greeted me in the politest manner, asking me to enter, while the courtesy was uttered in musical sounds I perfectly understood; so I concluded I was in all respects provided with powers adequate to my new destiny.

"Permit me to ask from what world you have come?" said he.

"From earth."

"From what country?"

"England," I replied, rather pompously.

Upon this he took from one of his followers a sort of tablet, evidently a list of heavenly spheres, and running his eye over it, muttered: "Earth—small star with a moon; inhabitants eat flesh; mostly warlike and fierce; cruel to animals; land and water; atmosphere of its own." Here he stopped, as if satisfied that these few remarks classified the world from which I came; and then he added, in the most civil tones:

"We are glad to see you, son of the Earth-star, and not the less so because it is some time since a traveller from your sphere arrived. Permit me now to show you the way to an abode wherein you may repose and refresh yourself; but, first, will you be so obliging as to change your attire?"

Hereupon some of the people that surrounded us brought forth a dress fabricated from a curious material resembling our own fleecy clouds. I afterwards found that the looms wherein it was made were built on elevations, and the great art consisted in catching the almost aërial matter as it floated by at the moment of *its utmost speed*, for then it could be drawn out with finer threads more readily than when strongly impelled by the winds of Heaven.[1] Not, however, to

[1] Mr. Wakefield, referring to a line in Lucretius,

"Et, quasi densendo subtexit cærula nimbis,"

remarks, "in the same way as in the art of weaving, the woof is thickened by thickening the texture of the threads employed."

Again, Virgil:

"Nor buoyant flies the fleecy wool through Heaven."

Or Thomson:

"The fleecy mantle of the sky."

anticipate. I thanked my friend for his gift, and copying his own mode of wearing it, I found myself in a costume something similar to the Roman toga, but more ample; indeed, so full, that a tunica would have been needless. It united simplicity, airy lightness, and grace, so that I felt I was costumed perfectly *à la mode*.[1]

"Sir," said I, "may I be permitted to ask by what name I may address you?"

"They call me Alâtedon," answered he, "signifying the conductor of strangers, since I have the honour of filling that delightful post in the city of Heliopolis—at least as far

[1] Before the invention of the loom, known to the early Greeks and Romans,

"The loom, that long renowned well-envied gift
Of wealthy Flandria, who the boon received
From fair Venetia; she from Grecian nymphs;
They from Phenicè, who obtained the dole
From old Ægyptus,"

our savage ancestors wore the skins of beasts *pinned together with thorns*, to which Virgil refers in describing the dress of Achæmenides. What a contrast is presented to this in the description of Democritus of the Persian actæa, "ornamented all over with golden millet grains; and all the millet grains have knots of purple thread passing through the middle, to fasten them inside the garment."

as the welcoming goes of all guests arriving at these portals, for there are numerous others round about, with which I have nothing to do."

"How fortunate I am," I replied, "to have arrived at this particular gate, where my first impression of the inhabitants is so delightful, owing to the courtesy of my informant."

At this, Alûtedon bowed and looked pleased, the more so, perhaps, because he felt I was sincere in the observation; in the same way that it was impossible for me not to observe that I was conversing with a solar *gentleman*, and I felt extremely pleased that I should be able to recognise the species in a new world.

"I shall now," said Alûtedon, "have the honour of escorting you to the residence I mentioned, which I trust you will find suitable to your requirements; and as we proceed, I shall be happy to answer any question your natural curiosity may prompt."

"The first advantage I shall take," I re-

plied, "is to inquire whether any title is attached to your name, that I may not commit the *gaucherie* of neglecting it."[1]

"No," answered he; "and you have already, by intuition, subscribed to any little weakness I might possess on that point, for accentuation in this country is the distinguishing mark of respect, and indeed of rank. Were you to call me Alutêdon, it would be a mere provincialism: Alûtedon is correct. Alutedôn would, from one below me in rank, be an insult; but from a foreigner, only a matter for a smile."

"Is it so generally throughout your country?" I inquired.

"Yes," he answered; "our language is composed of groups of musical notes; and rhythm imparts all the variety of meaning."[2]

[1] What a thorough bit of English character.

[2] The two first essentials of the harmony of human speech are, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *the two first essentials of music—melody and cadence.* Elsewhere he says that the articulation of language, φωνία, is analogous to the sound of a musical instrument. According to Quintilian, "rhythmus" answers exactly to the divisions of time in modern music. A fragment of Longinus offers an explanation

It would be difficult to convey an idea of Alûtedon's manner of speaking. Each syllable was a full delicious sound of music, modulated in the most extraordinary manner. Sometimes the same note expressing an idea was staccato; or gliding into another note its meaning was changed; then slightly swelling crescendo, it implied something else; then sinking diminuendo, its inference was altered. Thus one syllable, that is, one musical sound, had a thousand different modes of expression; and these again being multiplied by an infinite variety of combinations, a most exquisite mode of imparting thought was the result.

"And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies."

Be it also remembered that although these sounds were composed of vibrations of the air, yet the air of the Sun was a far more subtle fluid than with us, consequently a de-

of the difference between rhythmus and metre; while, indeed, in almost every author, ancient or modern, are to be found suggestions or inferences as to the close identity of music and language. Lucretius terms Music the *elder* sister of Poetry.

licacy yet power of articulation was attained quite indescribable and utterly unknown to our senses. Added to this, the capacity of appreciating sound was to the Helionites' ear more than a thousand times greater than our own; and that which we should term seven elementary notes, consisted with them of something like five hundred, each capable of about one hundred and fifty different modes of expression.[1] The best explanation I can offer of the peculiar character of each syllable of the language of the Sun, will be by a reference to our own musical signatures; and as the similarity may amuse, I will endeavour to explain it. The word love, for instance, was expressed, we will imagine, by the note or musical vibration of the air expressing our *b* natural of the scale, thus— . Well, this in the Solists'

[1] The wonder of this ceases if we look at home. Human hearing, according to Dr. Wollaston, is limited to about nine octaves, and the hearing of some of the lower animals *begins* where that of man *ends*; and yet the human ear can appreciate the twenty-fourth thousand part of a sound!

language could be expressed in about one hundred and fifty different ways, implying all the various distinctions which that magic word possesses. General or universal love —involving the sort of kiss which Schiller bequeathed to all mankind, and expressed, as we are presuming, by the above note, became with a sharpness of sound thus— , expressive of love for a particular person. Then the same note, half gliding into another similar note, would express tender regard, thus— . The repetition of this glide would express erotic love— . Elongated, it would denote family love, thus — . Love for the unseen, or religious love, thus— ; and so on with lines, dots, signatures, inflections, accents, *ad infinitum*. The peculiarity of the language consisted in sound being capable of expressing such small distinctions as the notes and , which with us would be only capable of appreciation by the eye. Indeed,

geometrical figures[1] of every description, from a conic section down to an ordinary circle, could be expressed in sound, so that the extent, power, and *influence*[2] of the language in this sphere may well be conceived.

Although the mode of conveying idea was thus with the Solites musical, it must not be confused with the *music, par excellence*, of the Sun, which was composed of perfectly distinct combinations. Every single note of their music, whether vocal or instrumental, consisted of a cluster of concordant notes,

[1] The nearest approach to this peculiarity with us will be found by means of the well-known effect of vibration on a plate of glass covered with small sand, which arranges itself into certain lines, according to the form of the plate, the point on which it is supported, and the point on which the violin bow is struck against its border. A perpendicular wire, with a small cone of charcoal, rendered incandescent by electric means, presents the most diverse and beautiful figures when struck at different elevations from its base.

[2] Plato has perhaps of any man pronounced the strongest judgment upon the natural effects of music. "No change," said he, "can be made in music without affecting the constitution of the state." Lord Chatham strongly corroborated this when he said, "Give me the making of the national ballads, and I care not who makes the laws."

and the division of time was totally distinct from that of the language. As a familiar comparison, I can only add, the speech of the Helionites was in a degree similar to one of our operas without words, wherein every note had a distinct signification; while an opera with them would have been as dissimilar from their language, as music with us differs from the most musical tongue known upon earth.

This digression being necessary, we will now return to our narrative, first promising that I make no attempt at a literal translation of the various conversations which occurred, only rendering their *sense*, as far as I am able, into English.

By this time Alûtedon's followers had allowed the portals to close, nor did they follow us as we proceeded; and I now perceived my conductor and myself in a long pathway running between two hills, which, rising on either side, were dotted with habitations of every description, all of which, as

far as I could discern, were made of the splendid material minica, assuming, of course, every possible form and colour.

Alûtedon here explained to me, in answer to my astonished looks, that a number of these narrow roads converged towards a smaller circumference, wherein was Heliopolis itself, and that my future abode was just on the confines of the bustling city.

That which most caused me astonishment was the fact that there seemed to reign around a sort of twilight, the cause of which I was utterly incapable of comprehending, for the Sun evidently contained its own light in its own body somewhere; and whence, then, this partial obscurity? In answer to my question as to the means by which the luminary was lighted, Alûtedon, begging me observe the results, stooped down and removed from the ground a tolerably large piece of a sort of thick, green, close-grained turf, upon which we had been walking; and I then perceived that it had acted as an opaque floor, for, streaming through the

aperture we had made, uprose a flood of illumination.[1]

At this discovery I could scarcely resist a cry of astonishment, for by it the fact burst upon my senses that we were walking upon a transparent globe, and that below us, in unfathomable depths, lived and burned that stupendous light which, shooting out its rays into millions and millions of miles, is the cause of light and heat not only to my own home, the planet Earth, but to a group of worlds[2] dependent also for their existence upon the beneficence of the mysterious fires I beheld at my feet. And this, too, without exerting any igneous effect upon the people who lived on the surface of this globe of light; but, on the

[1] Light flies across the earth's orbit, a space of 195 millions of miles, in sixteen and a half minutes; while it has been calculated, that were the particles of light the size of the twelfth hundred thousand part of a grain of sand, moving at their present velocity, every object would be battered and perforated by the celestial artillery, and our world and ourselves destroyed.

[2] The solar system consists of thirty-eight primary orbs or planets, at least nineteen secondary planets or moons which revolve round the larger masses, and a host of comets.

contrary, furnishing them with a temperate climate and delicious days. In fact, that fire which at the distance of 95,000,000 miles burns on earth, when its rays are attended with the fiercest blaze, was here at its source gentle and calm, like a flood of moonlight permeating the sphere on which we stood. And yet, as Milton says:

> "Hither, as to their fountains, other stars
> Repairing in their golden urns, draw light."[1]

With wonder and amazement I was rooted to the spot. Recovering myself at length, while Alûtedon smiled at my bewildered manner, I begged him to remove another square of this densely opaque coverlid; and,

[1] The reader will not fail to remember that splendid passage in Lucretius, beginning:

> "Largus item liquidi fons luminis, ætherius sol,
> Inrigat assidue cœlum candore recenti
> Subpeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen;"

or the lines, perhaps, of Klopstock, quoted by Dr. Good:

> "Well-spring of every beauty traced by sight,
> Forth flowing endless through the realms of space."
> *Messias*, i.

acceding to my request, I again looked down into a profound abyss of chastened yet closest light. I placed my hand upon the surface of the ground, and found it cool and yielding to my touch; but I observed it became harder and more crystal-like the deeper I attempted to penetrate.

At length, recovering my power of speech, I exclaimed:

"Merciful goodness, Alûtedon! what *is* below us?"

"Simply," answered Alûtedon, smiling, "we are standing on an immense ball of electric light, increasing in density towards the centre; and when you consider that this sphere is 882,000 miles in diameter, it necessarily follows that its light increases in power towards a maximum point of half that distance, or to 441,000 miles below us; and yet this luminous body, the source of light and heat to distant objects, is in itself without what you would term caloric, and only exhibits the phenomenon of

heat when its rays meet with a solid body."

"This I comprehend," I answered; "for if we climb a mountain on the earth, or ascend in a balloon, we get colder and colder the nearer we approach the supposed source of heat.[1] But still there is evidently warmth in the Sun."

"My good friend," said my companion, "so there is; quite sufficient to furnish us unworthy inhabitants with comfort and pleasure; but all things here are far more attenuated than with you, containing thus less of that 'calorific medium,' and, therefore, less of positive heat than you could imagine. But come," he added, "the period for repose will soon be over, and then we shall have enough to do and to see."

This latter speech was addressed to me, inasmuch as I found it impossible to resist stooping every moment to the ground, and

[1] "The sun's rays are only powerful when they act on a calorific medium. They are the cause of the production of heat, by igniting with the matter of fire which is contained in the substances which are heated."—*Philosoph. Trans.*

displacing portions of that velvet-like substance which shrouded the excess of light below us. This, no doubt, to an *habitué* of the Sun, looked extremely ridiculous, for my friend at length gave vent to a good fit of laughter (a run up the chromatic scale), and begged me to desist. "For," said he, "some of our rakes may be returning home at this hour, and if they should see you digging into the surface of the Sun" (he might have added, "like a truffle dog") "they will certainly think you are demented, and I shall come in, perhaps, for a share of their opinion."

"How strange," I thought to myself, "is this. Here am I, naturally lost in amazement at the stupendous method of lighting a universe, looking down into the mysterious depths of the fountain of fire, which bids our summers to come, and our sweet flowers to bloom —interpreting, in fact, one of the great secrets of Nature, and yet at the very moment, I may be scoffed at by some young fop returning home from a dance with the belles of Helio-

polis. How strange is the ascent of knowledge, when familiarity with Nature's miracles produces an indifference to their marvels, and where comparison is absolutely essential for the appreciation of the works of divine intellect." My natural impulse was to fall prostrate on the ground, and to pour forth my soul-felt adoration of this new proof of power which had burst upon my comprehension; and yet not only would this act have seemed ridiculous in the estimation of passers by, but the fear of ridicule absolutely inclined me to obey my new friend's mandate, and to hasten onward. "Ah," I thought to myself, "the weaknesses of human nature are not confined to earth."

As we proceeded, I asked my conductor if all the habitations I saw around me were lit from below.

"Most certainly," he replied; "our light ascends instead of descending, as yours does; and our floors are curtained and shuttered just as I suppose are your windows and skylights."

"You have oceans and seas, for I observed them when descending."

"Oh, yes," said he; "and when the bottom of the waters is only slightly or unequally covered with a coating of an opaque substance, the light shines upward, and we are enabled to perceive what the inhabitants of the fluid element are about. Our observations in the ichthyological department of natural history are consequently very curious."

"So I should think," quoth I; "and with such means of investigation Professor Owen would soon discover whether the great sea-serpent of the earth is a great myth, or a veritable child of ocean.[1] But how is it, Alûtedon, my friend, that as all your globe seems to be covered with a layer of this densely opaque body, that the electric light which

[1] The name of Owen must call to mind one of the most wonderful examples of deductive reasoning on record. The skeleton of the "wingless bird of New Zealand" was theoretically built up by Professor Owen from a small bone *a few inches* in length: the entire bones of the bird afterwards arrived from Australia, and in every particular corroborated the ideal form which had been constructed by the professor.

dwells in the centre of your sphere finds its way forth into the regions of space?"

"Ah," said Alûtedon, "your question is a very natural one. The fact is this. There are, it is true, vast continents of this turf-like substance imprisoning with its dense nature the light within, and vast tracts of ocean are covered at the bottom with the same material; but extensive as these dark fields are, they bear but a small proportion to the immense surface of the globe which is uncovered, and consequently transparent; and it is from this cause that the rays from our intense electric lamp are enabled to spread into the regions of ether, lighting all things within a certain limit of a vast circumference."

"Oh, oh!" I exclaimed, as a sudden conviction rushed across my mind, "this, then, accounts for a mystery which all our astronomers have hitherto been unable to solve. These opaque continents being grouped upon, or dotted over, the otherwise universally transparent surface of your planet, at once

explain what on earth we term maculæ, or spots on the sun!"[1]

"Of course," answered Alûtedon, by no means partaking of my delight at this discovery; "but are you not still more surprised when I tell you that we have night and day, and a warm and a cold season?"

"Indeed," I answered, "I cannot tell how it is possible, considering that the light is part and parcel of your own sphere; you cannot turn from it, for it is ever with you—ever present."

"Do you not observe," said he, "that even while we are talking the day is becoming lighter and lighter? Had you arrived a few hours sooner, you would scarcely have seen. And yet our globe is never in darkness."

I thought Alûtedon was poking a paradox at me, so I replied, perhaps a little petulantly:

[1] Whatever be the real nature of these spots, first discovered by Galileo, they have been useful to the astronomer in enabling him to observe the diurnal revolution of the sun.

"Your world never in darkness, and yet has its nights! Surely you are joking."

"Not at all," said he; "and you will see at once that there exists more cause for wonder than smiles; and even to us people in the Sun the arrangement I am about to describe is a beautiful exemplification of how exquisitely Nature adapts herself to the exigencies of every form of creation. On earth you have night and day in consequence of your rotating on your axis; and although we too rotate in about twenty-five days and fifteen hours, yet that cannot possibly decrease or increase our light, seeing that it exists in the heart of our sphere."

"Clearly," said I, "turn as you may, your light turns with you; then surely you have perpetual day?"

"Yes," said he, "we have perpetual day! But not to keep you longer in suspense, know that action and repose are as essential for the beings in this world as in your own, and perpetual day would so exhaust our energies,

that we should soon cease to exist. Providence, therefore, by a beautiful adjustment of means to an end, has so formed the optic nerve of all organised creatures gifted with vision, that its power of sustaining light fades, and is renewed at certain fixed intervals; thus in itself making day and night, and suggesting hours for action or repose."

In perfect astonishment I exclaimed: "Then night, day, and twilight, appear to you from internal causes instead of external?"

"Certainly," answered he. "Does not the day, at this moment, seem to be brightening?"

"Yes, indeed," I responded.

"Well," added he, "the effect is produced because our optic nerves are gradually recovering their energy, which, at their maximum point of power will remain fixed a certain number of hours, and will then slowly grow less and less capable of bearing light, till the minimum point of lost power

is gained: *thus night sets in in the brain, not in external nature.*"[1]

"But," said I, after a pause, "there must be this inconvenience attending such an arrangement—you cannot pursue any avocation during your nights."

"Quite wrong," quoth he, "for the artificial light we use in our houses and in our streets has the power of producing a tem-

[1] One of the most curious optical arrangements is that of the Surinam sprat, which having to swim near the surface of the water, possesses two distinct properties of vision, the upper half of the eye refracting rays transmitted by air, and the lower part refracting rays transmitted by water. All the other parts correspond with this strange structure, and constitute a double eye in one. Another extraordinary adaptation of means to an end is presented in the formation of the eyes of those reptiles living both on land and water. By muscles provided for the purpose, they increase, when in the water, the distance between the cornea and retina, and form a focus *upon* the retina, which, owing to the mode by which water refracts rays, would otherwise be beyond it. When in the air they relax these muscles, and the focus of an object falls as usual on the retina:—so that they are provided with spectacles fitting them for two elements. Yet another curious fact bearing more immediately upon the visual peculiarity of the people in the Sun, is the complete insensibility, in the human eye, to the impression of light on a certain point of the retina—like a mirror with part of the quicksilver rubbed off. According to Daniel Bernoulli, this spot is about the eighth of an inch in diameter.

porary return of optic sensibility, though in a mitigated form. The cause of this subtle and beautiful problem you will comprehend when you have attended some of our philosophical institutions."

I was so struck with this admirable yet simple method of meeting the evils of perpetual day, that for some moments I remained silent. At length I asked:

"And your seasons, Alûtedon—how about change in temperature?"

"Our atmosphere," he answered, "at different periods of the year becomes denser than at others, and thereby holds, as it were, a greater number of the molecules of light or heat in its grasp, producing summer at its highest point of density, and other seasons analogous to yours upon earth, according to a graduated scale of change. Of course, when most rare, the atmosphere produces our winter season."[1]

[1] The diversity of our own seasons depends upon the oblique position of the sun's path through the heavens. The obliquity of the ecliptic is growing less and less continually, and the seasons are thus imperceptibly tending to one unvaried spring.

"Snow and ice in the Sun!"

"Certainly; and some of our most exquisite articles here manufactured are produced during the winter months, for it so happens we possess the power of transferring all the ordinary productions of nature into articles suited to our wants. Ice we can turn into indissoluble blocks, and snow we can weave into garments soft and warm."

These facts charmed me not a little, as much by reason of a sort of analogy they established with the dear planet of my birth, as on account of their intrinsic interest, and for some little time I could only ponder upon what I had heard.

Alûtedon very politely avoided disturbing my reverie; but at length he ventured to do so, and the delicious music of his voice struck me as more beautiful from the previous silence.

"Heliophilus," said he—"for such will be your title while you sojourn amongst us—does it not strike you as surprising that I should be acquainted with any of the facts

connected with the world from which you have come?"

"Scarcely," I replied; "for I imagine your knowledge of external phenomena is as far beyond that of ours, as your world's bulk exceeds that of the earth."

"No," he answered; "I have gained a little smattering of what is going on in the stars from my official position, for as I before stated, it is my agreeable lot to welcome all strangers who may arrive at that particular portal where you alighted. Some of our visitors have no occasion to pass through a bodily metamorphosis to adapt them for our kingdom, but arrive in their primitive shape, and then indeed they are subjects of both wonder and amusement to us all."

"Indeed," I said, partly apostrophising; "so inhabitants of other worlds besides those of the earth find their way here?" And I felt partly vexed that I was not exclusively a stranger in the land.

Alûtedon smiled at this question, and pointing upward to millions of stars, which,

owing to the rarefied nature of the Sun's atmosphere,[1] I could perceive, exclaimed:

"Why, dear Heliophilus, should you imagine that the earth, out of all that starry host, alone sends its messengers to our sphere?"

I think I must have blushed or appeared conscious of egotism, for his accents grew tender, and his sweet voice softened into a tone of almost affection, as he continued:

"Look upward again. Dost thou see that point of ruby[2] light in the far regions of space? Look at it well, Heliophilus, shining

[1] The upper strata of air, being less dense, offer less resistance to the luminous rays, and hence a greater number of stars are visible at great elevations than at a lower level.

[2] "Insulated stars of a red colour, almost as deep as that of blood, occur in many parts of the heavens, and many of the double stars exhibit the beautiful phenomenon of contrasted or complementary colours. It is easier suggested in words than conceived in imagination, what variety of illuminations two suns—a red and a green, or a yellow and a blue one—must afford a planet circulating about either; and what charming contrasts a red and a green day, for instance, alternating with a white one and with darkness, might arise from the presence or absence of one or other, or both, above the horizon."—SIR JOHN HERSCHEL'S *Astronomy*, p. 395.

and lustrous like a gem set in the azure robe of Omnipotence; look at it and gaze with affection, for *that* star is the earth."[1]

There was something indescribable in the tones of Alûtedon's voice as he spoke, and something so gentle and enthralling in his manner, that I almost expected to hear the flutter of an angel's wings wafting him to other regions: but I did gaze upward as he told me; and who, earth-born, could have looked on that minute point in space, millions of miles distant, without being almost overpowered by his sensations? Just conceive our terrestrial history, with all our struggles, wars, passions, strivings, longings, love, sorrow, hatred, progress, art, science, literature, commerce, conquests, crime, virtue, and all the energy of nature in the past, and man in the present, all, all represented and expressed by that tiny star, shining above me like a little opening in the canopy

[1] To a spectator placed in the Sun all the planets would appear to describe circles in the heavens, though their orbits are really elliptical.

of heaven. "Ah," thought I, "thou unit amongst myriads, how chastened would thy inhabitants become—how sensible of the small part they play in the great drama of creation—could they but view thee, as I view thee now, a sand-note of fire in the melody of the heavens." Then, from a sort of revulsion of feeling, while I gazed on the starry hieroglyphics of the sky, and on the beauteous architecture of the universe, I thought of the houses in Harley-street; and while I adored the calm and stupendous Kosmos, I thought of a tea-party in St. John's Wood, with people around a table trying to turn it. In fact, I fell from the sublime to the ridiculous down the inclined plane of thought, and contact with the absurd roused me from my reverie.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "it is all wonderful. But tell me, Alûtedon, since you seem to be acquainted with the nature of our globe, have many of our inhabitants received the benefit of your escort in this sphere?"

"Yes, several," he answered; "but they

were all poets, since your people with prosaic minds would never bear the attenuation necessary for the voyage. Not that poets," added my informant, "are better than other men; on the contrary, they are often sad fellows, but delicacy of mental organisation is prefatory to becoming a more refined and sublimated animal."[1]

"Indeed!" I exclaimed; "do you mean writers of poetry?"

Alûtedon laughed at this.

"No," he said, "I mean poetical temperaments, those whose minds are so strung as to appreciate forms of actual beauty, and to imagine fresh combinations of excellence. There are many who have no gift for expressing poetry, but who feel it to the depth of their souls."

[1] The saw saith, "It is murder to hinder a poet from killing himself;" but another saw, sharper than the first, has it, "He who can view the world as a poet is always at soul a king." To this might be added Sir Philip Sidney's quaint description of what a poet ought to be; who winds up as follows: "He cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play; he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the will-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale."

"How about our men of money?" I asked.

"Never come here," said Alûtedon, drily. "A rich member of your city corporation did, if I remember, once leave your earth in a form of solar tenuity, but he collapsed into a metallic meteor, and fell back to the earth in no time."

"But wealthy men," said I, smiling, "are extremely useful members of society. They are ganglionic sources of wealth to others; reservoirs and fountain-heads whence flow the streams of gold. Then, is their transformation into rarer natures impossible?"

"Can't say," replied Alûtedon, curtly; "at all events, they never come here. Plutus and Helios will never be friends."

"How about our lawyers?" I demanded; "do they ever pay you a visit?"

At this question the expression of Alûtedon's face was so comical I could scarcely refrain from laughter, while certainly there was no further necessity for an interrogation.

How long the conversation might have

continued in this strain I know not, but the increasing beauty of the scene around us made me pause to observe it.

The sloping hills to my right and left were, as I before intimated, covered with edifices made of the lustrous and beautiful minica;[1] but they were now bathed in floods of softened yet intense light, which streamed up from apertures made by fan-

[1] Nothing could seem more impossible than the manner of forming "minica" by means of solidifying air. Indeed, many will think the idea verges on the ridiculous: and so it may; but it will be found that this "stretch of the imagination," which I hold a prescriptive right to use in the text, is equalled, if not exceeded, by a statement in a work called "The Marvels of Science," and which would seem to indicate in the writer an equal solicitude for the full development of the *two* substances in the title of his very amusing, and generally instructive book. In describing the properties of air, he finishes by saying: "It is composed of minute globular particles, which are in ceaseless motion revolving round their axes, and, though these evolutions are not usually discernible under certain conditions of temperature, *the particles solidify*, and their movements are then apparent." The author then proceeds to quote his authority, who declares he witnessed near Olexyko, in Prussia, the atmosphere like a *hard compact* mass, tremorously shaken, and which even resounded audibly! Mr. Fullom then goes on to surmise that "the Masters of Science, arguing from analogy, have long concluded that the atmosphere possessed the properties common to more definite bodies, and is capable both of *solidification* and liquefaction."

tastic cuttings in the thin, but dark and dense, coverlid of this curious region. Around some of the habitations this opaque substance, which I shall henceforth call Elytron, was cut away simply in concentric rings, so that the light streamed up from the openings, embracing the fairy-like residences in circumfluent light. Other occupants evinced *their* taste in arranging the openings of the Elytron in divers forms, like the different beds of flowers in our own parterres. From these the light arose, casting a halo upwards, and forming corresponding patterns in the atmosphere, like phantom geometrical figures writ in the air by magic hands; or as fantastic shapes invented in fairyland, changing their forms as the breezes swept through their airy outlines. Other habitations were shrouded in a semi-obscure light, produced by mats not wholly opaque, so arranged as to exclude the up-pouring rays. These abodes, Alûtedon told me, belonged principally to the rich—those who could best afford to slumber till a late hour.

By this time we had walked some considerable distance, and I could not fail to observe that the general body of light increased over all things. I perceived, too, that the tops of the hills had no sort of covering whatsoever; and as the light streamed out of their summits it was at once dissipated and diffused over the general atmosphere, while the contrast between the opaque portions of the ground and the various openings became every instant less apparent; so I understood, owing to the causes already explained, that we had been walking during the period of a solar night — night of the optic nerve[1] — and that a brilliant day would soon be ushered in. I also began to feel that I was by no means purely etherial, for a sensation of exhaustion gave unmistakable evidence that waste and replenishment of the system were exerting their sway even in this refined

[1] Page 52. In speaking hereafter of the nights in the Sun, I shall allude to them as ordinary nights, to avoid all unnecessary recapitulation.

sphere; and as, no doubt, my looks exhibited the real state of the case, Alûtedon took from his belt (made of a flexible ray of light) a sort of bulb-like flask of such delicate workmanship that the shade of that splendid old reprobate, Benvenuto Cellini, would, through sheer envy, have shaken in its shoes. Alûtedon presented this to me; and such was the perfect adaptation of my senses to the new world I was in, that I at once placed it to my lips, and imbibed the aroma of a delicious perfume[1] which revived me immediately.

[1] Alexis, in his "Wicked Woman," says:

"The best receipt for health
Is to apply sweet scents unto the brain."

Masurius asks, "Are you not aware that it is in our brain that our senses are soothed, and indeed reinvigorated by sweet smells?"

The ancients often anointed the breast with perfume, because "scents do, of their own nature, ascend upwards," and also because they considered that "the soul had its dwelling in the heart."

Anacreon says:

"Why fly away, now that you've well anointed
Your breast, more hollow than a flute, with unguents."

And Alcæus, the poet,

"He shed a perfume over all my heart."

See Yonge's "Banquet of the Learned," book xv.

By this I conjectured that the inhabitants of the Sun lived upon delicate exhalations of flowers and fruits, and not upon solid food. Indeed, I had remarked that the only functions I possessed that could possibly support life were the lungs.

"What! no stomach!" exclaims the astonished reader, and a Killarney echo answers, "None." I was destined to exist upon air and perfume, like the rest of the people here; and by this arrangement of nature a number of inconveniences were avoided, and amongst others that of coarse gluttony; though I afterwards discovered that there existed *gourmèts* in the odour line, as there are gourmands with us, and that distillers, in all the graduated scale from a Savàrin to a scullery-maid, were the class in the Sun answering to our genus "cook." Just as one of our connoisseurs of wine lifts up his glass daintily between his fingers, and after regarding it in the light, takes a cautious sip, and gives a bland smile if it meet his approval, so these children of light would

hold the vessel containing their fragrant food, and giving it a gentle squeeze, allow an atom of scent to titillate the critical nose, and then, if approved, they applied their lips to the orifice of the flask and imbibed the contents, as we inhale chloroform or laughing gas.[1]

This system of nature supporting life by bringing the blood in constant contact with a large surface of air by means of an excess of pulmonary extension, had the effect of

[1] Apollonius of Herophila, in his treatise on perfume, writes as follows:—"The iris is best at Elis, and at Cyzicus; perfume from roses is most excellent at Phaselis, Naples, and Capua; that made from crocuses is in highest perfection at Soli, in Cilicia, and at Rhodes; the essence of spikenard is best at Taurus; the extract of vine-leaves at Cyprus and at Adramyttium; the best perfume from marjoram and from apples comes from Cos; Egypt bears the palm for its essence of cypirus, and the next best is the Cyprian and Phœnician, and after them comes the Sidonian; the perfume called Panathenaicum is made at Athens; and those called Metopian and Mendesian are prepared with the greatest skill in Egypt. Still the superior excellence of each perfume is owing to the purveyors, and the materials, and the artists, and not to the place itself."

This enumeration, which, by the way, ought to be invaluable to Messrs. Delcroix, will, by changing the names of scent and places, do equally well for a description of the odours in Heliopolis.

imparting great purity to the system, delicacy to the organisation, refinement to the cerebral functions, and exceeding sensibility of temperament generally. In lieu of great muscular power, nervous energy was paramount—not acting upon fibres, but immediately upon the mind—so that the perceptions of these Helionites were intensely vivid, but chastened by an extreme tenderness of nature.

An adoration of the shadowy images of pure spiritual existence, and a keen appreciation of the wondrous forms of physical beauty[1] which surrounded them, were also characteristics of these most singular people,

[1] Goethe says, "We should do our utmost to encourage the Beautiful, for the Useful encourages itself." Hawksworth has a paper in the "Adventurer," to prove that personal beauty is produced by moral sentiments, and upon this subject Lavater's works contain unanswerable facts. Leigh Hunt makes a most eloquent appeal to people in general to cultivate a love of the beautiful, which after all—however much people may differ in their definition of beauty, Aristotle making size an element of beauty, Burke making smallness—is the external form of internal harmonies. We must remember, too, that certain predispositions of the mind are needful for the appreciation of beauty. Amongst others, are

whose vices were humbler grades of virtue, and whose ills were those arising from the chromatic colourings of happiness involving the necessity of some, being less blessed than others.

Alûtedon was now taking me from the path we had hitherto followed, and I found we were ascending a gentle slope, in which stood an exquisite sort of cottage *ornée*, which he informed me was to become my home. When I say small, of course I mean relatively so, for on our earth it would have occupied about the space of one of the largest squares; but here so vast were surrounding objects that it appeared but an extremely pretty villa, encircled, like one of our own dear country retreats, with flowers and climbing plants, and shrubs and trees, but all differing from those of the earth in texture, appearance, and purpose.[1]

"cultivation, sensibility, serenity and cheerfulness," and above all, a loving and tender nature. The mind then becomes a delicate beautyscope (to coin a new word), which indicates the various degrees of beauty to great perfection.

[1] The flora of the Sun will be hereafter described.

"Now," said Alûtedon, as we stood on the threshold of this little Paradise, "I shall leave you, that you may enjoy a few hours' repose, and when your tired nature is recruited, I shall have the pleasure of escorting you over our city, and of presenting you to our sovereign prince; while the greatest boon you can bestow upon me will be to express any desire you may wish to have gratified."

Of course I returned a proper response, full of gratitude, to this courteous speech, and scarcely was his back turned, when, overcome with the excitement of all I had seen, I cast myself on a couch, which, judging by its odour and peculiar texture, was made of pot-pourri, or some mixture of dried flowers[1] peculiar to the Sun.

[1] "And on the fourth day she (Cleopatra) paid more than a talent for roses; and the floor of the chamber for the men was strewed a cubit deep, nets being spread over the blooms." —Athenæus, book iv.

Homer speaks, too, of splendid beds, especially those which Arete orders her handmaids to prepare for Ulysses.

Ephippus says:

"Place me where rose-strewn couches fill the room,
That I may steep myself in rich perfume."

Pliny tells us that a floor of roses was often a means of

Strange to relate, at the moment my wearied limbs pressed this delicious bed, a strain of ravishing music, subdued but soul-stirring, poured forth a symphony which I fancied was wafted from Heaven itself. The melody was quite indescribable, but it awoke all the religious feelings of the heart, and swept those chords of the mind which vibrate to the love and adoration of the invisible and unknown. Too ravished with the melody to speculate as to its source, I sank into slumber undisturbed by the shadow of a vision.

dispelling by its fragrance that heaviness and stupefaction which too often succeed drinking. The custom until modern times was usual in Persia and Arabia, and is alluded to by Rakeek, an Arabian poet.

CHAPTER III.

OF HELIOPOLIS AND ITS WONDERS.

BATH PLANT—DRESS—ABORIGINES—WORKS OF ART—FEAST OF FRAGRANCE—VEGETABLE COIFFURE—BUDS AND BLOSSOMS—UN CONCETTO—RELIGION—CITY OF DIAMONDS—ORDER—IRIS-BRIDGES—MANUFACTORIES—PALACE OF HELIONAX—LOVE OF CURVES—CARYATIDES—BEAUTY—SHOPS—GEOMETRIC STREETS—ELECTRIC CARRIAGES—GENTLEMEN DRIVERS—THE LADIES—COSTUME—FIRE-PINS—EROS AND ANTEROS—SCULPTURE—FOUNTAINS OF LIGHT—JETS OF BOUQUETS—WONDROUS FLOWERS—BAZAAR OF ODOURS—MORAL MONEY—RAIN—KALEIDOSCOPE-CLOUDS—GLANCING ANKLES—ARRIVAL AT THE PALACE.

When I awoke I found the most brilliant light streaming up through the crystal-like floor of my room, though a most excellent arrangement of Elytronic matting enabled me to moderate it as I pleased. I felt so refreshed, so joyful, and my spirit so elastic, that I could scarcely believe I existed in a

natural world, and the prospect around me was well calculated to sustain the delusion.

My abode consisted of my bed-chamber, or Thalamus,[1] with arched openings leading to a garden. A curtain of some curious material led to another apartment, which I must call the Atrium, or principal chamber, leading out of which I discovered the Balneum, the baths in which were filled with a milk-white fluid, which I perceived dropped from clusters of blossoms trained from a tree in the garden[2] into the chamber. Into this bath I leapt with delight; and while I lay luxuriating in its warm and soft embrace, the corollas of the flowers above, suddenly opened internal valves, and poured down a

[1] This and the following names are borrowed from those given to the rooms in the houses of Pompeii.

[2] This bath-plant is scarcely more wonderful than the common cocoa-nut tree, and many of the trees of North and South America, whose different fruits supply the inhabitants with food, milk, canoes, weapons of all sorts, twine, gum, sugar, glue, and other essentials to man. Of the palm it has been said, "a single tree will supply every want of its possessor, even though a Sybarite in his way."

shower of some cool perfumed fluid on my head. When I had sufficiently enjoyed the thraldom of the delicious douche, I arose like a god kissed by the lips of Elysian waters, and my surprise may well be conceived when at this minute a shower of the softest and sweetest farina fell all over me, which I perceived was yet another gift of the extraordinary plant above me.[1] This mixing with the moisture on my skin, formed a sort of aromatic paste, which instinct told me to rub well into my body, the while I thought to myself, "To what a land of luxury I have come!"

[1] It is not often an opinion *against* the use of the bath is to be found, but "every medal has its obverse." Antiphanes, in the "Deipnosophists," points out their injurious character:

"Plague take the bath! just see the plight
In which the thing has left me;
It seems to have boiled me up, and quite
Of strength and nerve bereft me.
Don't touch me, curst was he who taught a
Man to soak in boiling water."

Again, Hermippus:

"As to mischievous habits, if you ask my vote,
I say there are two common kinds of self-slaughter:
One, constantly pouring strong wine down your throat,
T'other plunging in up to your throat in hot water."

Another shower of a fragrant liquid, different from the other, completed my ablutions; and I then perceived a pile of immensely large leaves, soft as eider-down and fine as gossamer-web, lying ready to my hand. With these natural towels I polished myself off, and casting my cloud-spun mantle around me, was prepared for the events of the first day in Heliopolis.

An opening from this chamber led into another, wherein I found garments of every conceivable texture and colour. Some were coarse, made of the clouds that floated over the surface of the Sun just before rain came on. Others were more delicate, made from the same material, but selected and spun in aërial looms at high altitude. Others were so extremely fine that they were evidently manufactured with nicest art from the air itself. In fact, I was not long in perceiving that the atmosphere which enveloped the Sun was so rich in gifts to the inhabitants that it could well be likened to our own fruitful soil. It furnished building materials

of all sorts of shape and tint; manufactured goods of every conceivable quality; fancy fabrics for the rich; useful ones for the poor; with the aid of perfume it supported life; it prevented corruption in every form; and as will be fully seen anon, it was the means of riches and comfort to the inhabitants.

Perhaps it may be asked why the people in a climate so salubrious needed dress in any shape—why did they not exist in a state similar to our parent before the fall? and I can only reply by explaining the fact that the Helionites bore an exact resemblance to the beings of earth, save and except they were all exquisitely beautiful, and instead of their animal economy rendering animal food necessary, air and perfume, as before explained, were the aliments which sustained life.

The lungs extended from the thorax to the hip-joints, occupying the place of a human being's stomach, duodenum, &c., so that any residue of sweet fragrance percolated through the skin. The bath, therefore,

was an important point in the conduct of their personal affairs.

The circulation of blood was performed, as with us, by means of a heart; and a very important organ it was; for be it remembered, it had to force the blood through an astonishing excess of pulmonary development. The specific weight of the blood, however, was much less than might be supposed, owing to the pure nutriment on which the Solites existed, and thus its passage through the veins and arteries suffered no impediment from intrinsic causes of hindrance.

The absence of all solid food removed the necessity for mastication; consequently, in lieu of molars and incisors, they possessed a delicate line of ivory, extending, as our teeth extend, around the jaw-bones, fixed therein by an alveolar process, as are our own grinders. Indeed, the appearance presented was that of a row of the most exquisite teeth, and it was only by close inspection that you perceived they were without divisions.

These bands of beautiful material served the Helionites to press against the firm substance which held the various odours on which they subsisted, so that while they filled an office of utility, they added to the personal charms of these glorious beings—and here again Nature manifested the affluence of her handiworks, by her ever-beloved union of utility and ornament.

Since the Helionites, therefore, were possessed of an outward appearance similar to that which distinguishes a human being born in this planet,[1] it consequently follows that dress was a necessary tax upon their perfect freedom of locomotion; or should the reader demur to this, and deny the necessity, I can only declare that the exigencies of my nar-

[1] Of the beings in this sphere Mr. Horace Smith could never have sung—

"Plumes! pearls! that gem beauty's diadem!
Unguents that perfume give it!
Your pomp and grace is the refuse base
Of the ostrich, oyster, and civet!
Even mighty kings—those helpless things
Whose badge is the royal ermine—
Their glory's pride must steal from the hide
Of the meanest spotted vermin."

rative compel me to avoid a statuesque reflex of the living and breathing forms it was my fortune to meet.

I should fill fifty volumes instead of one were I to describe every little article of decoration or utility which abounded in my dwelling. The arrangements were all perfect. Works of art greeted me at every step; but though in appearance they were solid, they escaped the sense of touch, and the hand passed *through* their exquisite outlines instead of coming in contact with a hard substance. My ravished vision, however, drank in the perfection of forms, and surprise at their tenuity was lost in wonder at their aërial loveliness.[1] Of course all things were arranged in reference to the ascending property of light, while the ceiling or roof of the edifice was cut in all manner of facets, which refracting the rays,

[1] An effect somewhat similar to this can be produced by means of concave mirrors, from which aërial figures stand out in a manner so illusive that the beholder can scarcely credit their immateriality until satisfied by an attempt to grasp them.—See Sir D. Brewster on "Natural Magic."

imparted a brilliant and gorgeous effect difficult to describe.

I now entered a fourth apartment, answering to the Roman "Triclinium,"[1] and I drew a long breath of delight as the sweet aroma of a hundred odours was wafted on the air. These perfumes (to compare volatiles with food and wine) answered to the promulsis, bellaria, and mulsum, of the ancients, and were enclosed in flexible flasks, or "amphoræ," made of *pliable* glass, inlaid with minute pencillings of light, which had been caught and transmuted into golden lines and threads.

I tested each and all of these fragrant delicacies, and found that they varied as much

[1] The Triclinium, or dining-room, of the ancient Roman houses, was often a scene of the greatest extravagance and luxury. In the pages of Horace, Juvenal, Petronius, Martial, Suetonius, Aulus Gellius, Macrobius, and, especially for odd recitals, Athenæus, will be found most interesting descriptions of the "goings on" of the followers of Epicurus, whose palates by practice had become so nice they recognised the different breeds of oysters, and like Nero, were able to detect the various species, whether from Circœi, or from the Lucrine Rock, or from the beds of Rutupiæ.

as our articles of food vary. After inhaling this *recherché* nourishment I felt perfectly refreshed, and passing into the garden, took a stroll amongst the flowers and shrubs, which surpassed the fabled beauties of the Hesperides or Alcinous. A casual glance at the floral wonders around, soon convinced me that vegetation in this sphere supplied the inhabitants with a thousand necessities, and subscribed to their personal wants in a most remarkable manner. There was the Bath plant, the uses of which I had already experienced. Then there were others, a sort of vegetable coiffure, which cut the hair of the Helionites with its sharp scissors-like leaves, powdered it with pollen, scented it with an essential oil of its own growth, and absolutely combed it with its serrated corollas, and arranged it in graceful folds according to the impulse of the hour or the fashion of the day.[1]

[1] This, to the general reader, may smack too much of the marvellous; but be it known unto him that in our own botany there are flowers *which eat meat!* and whose natures approximate so nearly to that of animals, that naturalists have been

These plants formed a link between the animal and the vegetable world, but they were not gifted with the power of locomo-

puzzled to fix the line which divides the animal and vegetable kingdom. I have been at some pains to ascertain the particulars relating to this most curious class of flowers, and I am indebted to Dr. Basham for th ollowing information on the subject:

"The *Dionœa muscipula* is supposed to derive nutriment from the flies that are caught by the closing of the lobes of the leaves. The margin of these lobes is furnished with a number of spines, which, when the lobes fold together, accurately dovetail one with another, like the teeth of a trap. When an insect crawls over the unfolded lobe the irritability of the leaf is excited, the lobes suddenly close, and the insect is caught, and afterwards falls round the roots, where, decaying, it furnishes nutriment as a manure. It was Mr. Knight who made experiments on the apparently carnivorous plants. Some of these were secured from the possibility of any insects having access to them, and were supplied with scraped beef, while others were left unfed. The result seemed to be in favour of those which had been supplied with this animal provender. With regard to the pitchers of Sarracennia and Nepenthes, the contents of these receptacles seem to consist of something more than water. The fluid contained in the unopened pitcher of a plant which flowered in the botanic garden of Edinburgh was found to emit, while boiling, an odour like baked apples, from contained vegetable matter, and, when evaporated to dryness, yielded crystals of the quadroxatate of potash. In the record of this experiment in the *Botanical Magazine*, 2798, and in *Jameson's Journal* for 1830, a good account of nepenthes will be found. The mode of germination of this plant is most interesting."

tion,[1] and it required a certain knowledge of their various attributes before one could employ them properly. The nature of their odour was a sort of language, varying in degrees of sweetness according to their humour; for sometimes they had little tiffs one with another, and then they scolded with fragrance, and blurted out honey-dew in a most spiteful manner.

Others of the flowers and shrubs were purely vegetable, increasing in beauty according to their decrease in utility; for Nature generally compensates for the absence of some good by the counterbalance of another.[2] No language can convey an idea

[1] And *plants walk* as well as eat meat, as the following description of the "Desmodium gyrans" will prove:—"The leaflets, paired laterally beneath a large terminal leaf, alternately incline up and down, changing one movement for the other as soon as they attain a certain elevation or depression; and this oscillation is shared by the terminal leaf, which has a corresponding range of inclination, and moves up and down in a similar way."—*Marvels of Science.*

[2] Birds of the most beautiful plumage are generally songless; while those with music in their souls are dressed in brown or russet. The ornithology of China, Japan, and Australia, paints the air with its gaudy palette; but vocal melody is rare.

of their exceeding loveliness; and when it is remembered that light on the surface of the sun boasted at least 200 elementary colours, it is not to be wondered at that their combinations produced tints, and dyes, and shadows of tints marvellous to contemplate.[1] Oh that Mr. Ruskin had been my companion, how his colour-loving soul would have become intoxicated with prismatic draughts!

The number of odours, too, was proportionately great, as also the forms of their floral progenitors, while all things, be it remembered, were in relation to the dimension of the sphere; and every product of the sun, whether organic or inorganic, partook of the general increase.

I wandered in this maze of buds and blossoms for some time, and soon discovered that the sense by which I *smelt* perfumes

[1] Our own prismatic colours consist of three elementary ones; and it is difficult to conceive how the light of the sun, *is* the sun, could furnish more than those known on the earth —unless, indeed, a higher degree of optic sensibility could detect any redundance.

was quite distinct from that of their inhalation for the purpose of existence.

How long I should have remained in this enchanting garden I know not; but the footstep of some one approaching told me I was not alone, and the graceful Apollo-like form of Alûtedon, his face beaming with the sunshine of a cheerful and happy spirit, emerged from the foliage of some adjacent shrubs.

He smiled when he perceived me bending over the perfumed cups of the fragile beings of the soil, and in playful tones exclaimed:

"Have a care you are not contaminated by these idle and spoiled children of Flora, for nothing can equal the *dolce far niente* style of their lives. They are called in the morniug by Light, and even then scarcely turn in their beds; they are dressed by their waiting-maid Colour, and never do a thing for themselves; they are fed by the Breezes, and have only to open their leafy lips without even earning their salt; they are waited on by the honey-bee, their belted knight,

and trusty messenger, and by him they send poetical love-ditties one to the other, and only give him board and lodging for his pains! Then fly such idle company, dear Heliophilus, and come with me abroad to see the busy world and the doings in Heliopolis."

"A thousand thanks, dear friend," said I, smiling at his concetto, "but I could live for ever in this little world, my home. How can I possibly evince my gratitude to your good Prince who has presented me with a dwelling in itself a Paradise of the Sun?"

"Oh! a mere bagatelle," he answered; "and as for gratitude, if you feel any, so much the better for us, for in this country we live by eliciting the kindly feelings of the heart; and in the same way that our bodies are supported by delicate exhalations, so our minds receive all their pleasure and satisfaction from the essence of the good and kind sentiments of those about us."

I was struck with this statement, but I said nothing further on the subject, for I felt

that thanks would ill express all I desired to say; so I turned the conversation by telling him how astonished I was at the miraculous bath, and how completely overwhelmed with surprise at the magical hymn which had burst on my ravished ear the previous night.

"There is nothing very wonderful in either," answered he, "for ordinary laws are the cause of both. An arrangement of musical notes so placed as to respond to the pressure of your body explains the one, and the other is referable to Nature's providing certain plants with a peculiarity of structure which we turn to our best advantage. Every couch on which we sleep is provided with a musical spirit (if I may use the term); so that under any circumstance it is impossible to repose without the religious faculties being awakened, and prayer and gratitude to the Giver of Life is the result."

"But would it not be better," I demanded, "if prayer and thanksgiving were elicited

without any other dictation than that of internal feeling?"

"Possibly," said he, "in your world; but religious melody here is what religious books are with you on earth; for the soul in its highest flights can find no expression so appropriate as that of melody."

"But," rejoined I, still rather obstinate on my point of objection, "you make the stirring of the religious faculties an act of compulsion; but ought not the dictates of worship to flow from the inward impulse of the soul?"

"Nay," replied Alûtedon, "we only suggest worship by the strains which greet us at retiring to rest, and if there were no corresponding fervour in the heart, so much the worse. But whether right or wrong, the fact *is* a fact with us people on the Sun, that a sacred melody before resigning ourselves to the loss of unconsciousness is quite essential a state happiness—indeed, it is part of our religion."

I was, of course, deeply anxious to learn

the precise nature of the religion of these people, so I ventured to ask, not without some misgiving, what particular form their love assumed for the great Author of their being.

"It consists," he replied, "of a never-ceasing struggle during our life to emerge, when we pass into a new state of existence, into that form of an unalloyed nature which shall harmonise us in a degree with the characteristics of the Deity. Our external or material method of manifesting this desire is chiefly by the aid of exquisite melodies; and melody, you must remember, excites the various faculties of veneration, love, tenderness, and imagination—all, as I take it, parts at least of the unfathomable Intellect that rules our destiny and upholds the universe."

"But, surely," said I, "you have churches and stated times of worship?"

"'Churches,'" he exclaimed, "when the whole world is a temple! 'stated hours of worship,' when our life is one perpetual act

of adoration![1] If our internal feelings of love for the unseen become wearied by too great a tension, we resort to the master works of our great musicians; for you must remember that the power of music to renovate the faculties of the mind, and to rearrange the disturbed balance of religious perceptions, is attributable to our love of, and necessity for, that principle which is termed *order*.[2] The simplest musical instrument, capable of yielding the musical scale, lying neglected and untouched, contains within its silent material form a portion of the mind of omnipotence; and, perhaps, absurd as this assertion may seem, if

[1] If one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme, intelligent author. To have made this the ruling, the habitual sentiment of our minds, is to have laid the foundation of everything religious. The world henceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration.—PALEY'S *Natural Theology*.

[2] The pleasure afforded by harmony is attributed by Dr. Young to the love of order; and "to a predilection for a regular repetition of sensations natural to the human mind, which is gratified by the perfect regularity and rapid recurrence of vibrations."

you consider the power of this so-called 'order,' from which sprang not only music with her train of sweet influences, but the universe itself, the seeming extravagance will vanish."

"True," I replied, "and there exists not the minutest form of matter but which, in eloquent language, speaks of a supreme intelligence; but the mind requires considerable training ere it can properly translate the every-day things of life into a language speaking of divine power.[1] There is one question, Alûtedon, I desire especially to ask of you, 'Do you not find it impossible to refer at once to the supreme Creator without the aid of some intermediate assistance, which on the one hand shall, by the force of supreme intellect, comprehend divine attributes, and on the other be able to adapt itself to the nature of, comparatively, a low order of beings?'"

[1] I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects treated with a decidedly Christian tone.—Dr. Arnold.

I then explained the nature of the religion of our western world, and endeavoured to impart a slight notion of the exceeding beauty of the Christian belief. I expounded to him as well as I was able its sustaining influence under all the evils mankind had to suffer, and I attempted to make clear to him how completely our moral existence was supported by the exquisite doctrines of our great teacher, and how he had formed an harmonious moral world of beauty out of the chaos of men's passions.

I entered at some length into the subject, which evidently made a great impression on Alûtedon, and it was some little time before he replied to my question.

"No," he at length said, "we have no occasion for an intermediator; but the time may come when the shadow of evil shall pass over this favoured world, and, then, perhaps a beacon of moral light may be needed amidst the storms of passions and the wreck of virtue: or possibly, in the dim past, we have already gone through an ordeal of

suffering and sin similar to your own, and our present happy condition is perhaps a bright epilogue to a period of sadness, upon which the curtain has fallen never more to rise."

The vast fields of thought which this brief dialogue opened up absorbed both of us in contemplation. At length Alûtedon, with a happy smile, exclaimed, "But come, Heliophilus, no more of this; for as soon as we reach yonder ridge of hills we shall get a glimpse of Heliopolis, which, let me tell you, is famous amongst all the nations scattered over the Sun."

During our conversation we had walked, or rather sauntered, along a continuation of the path we had threaded the previous day, and an abrupt line on the horizon made me intuitively feel I should from thence have a view of Heliopolis. Nor was I wrong in my surmise; for no sooner had we made our way through a small grove of emerald fruit, the cores of which were luminous, than we

stood upon the verge of a valley, within whose bosom lay the City of the Sun.

Never shall I forget the prospect which now burst upon my astonished view. Spread out in vast dimensions was a metropolis which would have covered an area of nearly all Europe, built entirely of the beautiful minica, and blending every conceivable colour in soft radiations, while palace after palace, dome above dome, minaret upon minaret, cupolas rivalling cupolas, rose, glistening in the bright and buoyant air of the Sun; the refulgent rays of whose light were here and there reflected back into double magnificence by peculiar glossy and shining clouds, which floated over the city, like recumbent and benignant genii of the place. In truth, the whole capital appeared an entire city of diamonds, whose thousand facets were the irregular outlines consequent upon a diversified and complicated architecture viewed from a distance. If all the gems and precious stones of this world

(earth) had been collected together, arranged symmetrically, according to the rules of highest art, and then an electric light sent through them, reflected, refracted, and polarised, such, and such only, could convey, on the scale of an ant-hill to the Andes, an idea of Heliopolis as I looked down from the elevation on which I stood, riveted to the spot in amazement and awe.

The city itself was surrounded on all sides with gentle undulations, covered with the velvet-like elytron; and indented in these slopes were pathways converging to a common centre, similar to the one I had already traversed with Alûtedon.

At the trans-urban termini of these roads were erected gates like unto the one at whose portals I had arrived, while those paths which led directly into the city were united to it, by bridges spanning a sort of dip; and these bridges were made of nothing more nor less than what we term rainbows, rendered permanently solid, but retaining in this state all their original

prismatic splendours. The slopes, within which this gorgeous capital reposed, were dotted with houses, looking in the distance, owing to the sparkling material of which they were built, like clusters of stars just fallen to the ground.

Further off, rising in the dim horizon, were enormous buildings, quite differing from any of the others, and these Alûtedon informed me were manufactories for making minica, and every description of fabric, from the clouds, from water, from air, and also from ten thousand articles furnished by the vegetable world.

Alûtedon, smiling at my looks of astonishment, pointed out the palace of his Sovereign; but I scarcely needed this intimation, by reason of its superb appearance From the spot where we stood it did not appear larger than many of the public edifices, but in architectural beauty it rose conspicuous as a model of taste and harmony. Its walls were composed of solid blocks of an amethyst-tinted minica, and each block was

set in golden cement, which formed successive edges or frames around them, beautiful in the extreme. These, as Alûtedon informed me, were chased and engraved in the most elaborate manner. The mullions and the hyperthyron of certain openings for the admission of perfumed air (windows, it must not be forgotten, were on the ground) were the colour called by us *eau de Nile,* and a fretwork or delicate tracery of Helionic precious stones were set around them.

The dome or roof was formed of an entire block of the purest minica, free from the slightest flaw, and perfectly achromatic. By a delicate and difficult art upon this were engraved various lines and curves of beauty, which were classified and arranged in such a manner that the spaces between the points of union produced exquisite patterns.[1]

[1] *Apropos* of curves, I must ask the reader's attention to a beautiful physiological fact, which I believe is not so generally known as it deserves. Curves, or portions of the circle or ellipse, are, and have been, time immemorial, esteemed for their beauty, from the period when the Egyptians copied them from the egg, down to the time of Hogarth and his

A frieze ran round the base of this dome with figures in strong relief, describing the progress of art in the kingdoms of the Sun, and the various emblematic figures were composed of a peculiar and rare substance which, owing to the presence of a sort of moving laminæ, conveyed the idea of motion to the objects. The cornice above the frieze, and the entablature below it, were made of bands or slabs of enormous ruby-like stones, conveyed thither from an immense distance from the mines of the Sun, their peculiarity being a sort of intrinsic lustre, which had the

"line of beauty." The fact of this predilection arises simply *because* the muscles of the eye move in undulatory lines, thus conveying to the brain a facility for comprehending them. If the muscles moved in lines of acute angles, we should admire all square forms and sharp and abrupt turnings, like the articles of decoration in the time of the Empire. Of course, occasionally we admire those angles where a distinct use suggests them, or where they become an agreeable variety to the curve, just as after a period of rest we enjoy the change of standing or walking.

As Owen Jones truly observes, "There can be no beauty of form, no perfect proportion or arrangement of lines, which does not produce repose." It is possible that even the accomplished writer of these lines, is not aware that dissection of the human eye, has exposed the cause of an effect so well known to, and so admirably used by, the gifted architect.

power of turning its own colours into harmony with surrounding objects.

At every angle of the building were figures of the spirits of the elements,[1] colossal in size, and formed by wondrous mechanism in such a manner that the element they presented existed, or seemed to exist, in themselves. That of Fire, appeared an angel-like form in glowing fuel, sometimes copper-coloured, anon vermilion, then incandescent, but never distracting the beholder, or subtracting, by an impertinent evidence, from the other objects of beauty around.[2]

The figure of Air was the most lovely form

[1] Evidently answering to our Caryatides and Persians. Vitruvius declares that "the proportions of columns were derived from the human figure; the capital representing the head, the shaft the body, and the base the feet. Thus were termed: the Tuscan—the gigantic; the Doric—the herculean; the Ionic—the maternal; the Corinthian—the virginal."

[2] This is a most important canon in art. No one part should attract to the detriment of another, or, as I venture to say in the text, give an "impertinent evidence." An infringement of this law is seen every day in our own interiors. You enter a room groaning with buhl and or-molu, and objects of art in every direction, but a gaudy carpet, painted by an intoxicated Iris, distracts the eye, upsets the judgment, and disorders the whole.

conceivable. It was almost impossible to tell where the real air commenced and that of the figure began. Nevertheless, its outline was distinct and perfect, and although it seemed as if it would elude the grasp or touch, it was solid and hard!

The figure emblematic of the Sun was a masterpiece of perfection; for while it glowed like its fellow, the spirit of Fire, yet its light was more sparkling, and almost joyful in its character.

The figure representing Water seemed now dissolving into a cascade, now assuming form and outline, now again liquifying, or fading to a mist, and then regaining its wondrous shape of life.

Other extraordinary productions, representing as it were the natural and the ideal world, were placed in appropriate positions; but not to strain the attention of the reader by too minute a description of this stupendous building, I will only add, that the palace stood on a series of thin plinths, raising it to an elevation above all the surround-

ing edifices; and these steps were formed of a darker material than the rest of the building, imparting, very properly, a solidity to the base. Internally they were transparent, so as to admit the up-pouring rays of light from the depths below.

By this time we had met many of the habitants, and they had saluted both my companion and myself in the most gracious manner conceivable. Nor did any of them rudely stare because they saw that I was a foreigner, but dignity and self-respect were apparent in every gesture. Their countenances all bore a happy and contented expression, without that look of excitability which so often suggests an hour to come of deep depression. Their personal beauty was remarkable, and, as I shall often have occasion to mention this magic word, be it understood that beauty in this country was the symbol of virtue—her outward dress and lineaments—and though, of course, it differed in degree (for comparison in all things is needful for the appreciation of all things), yet I soon per-

ceived that its all-powerful sway reigned supreme throughout the kingdom of the Sun.[1]

The nearer we approached the city the more numerous the crowd became; and having arrived at one of the Iris-bridges, we strolled over, and found ourselves amongst a

[1] Aristotle relates that the Ethiopians elected their chief magistrate as much by reason of his personal good looks as his mental endowments.

Euripides says, "a visage worth a kingdom;" Zenophon, that "beauty is a quality upon which nature has affixed the stamp of loyalty."

Heliogabalus was elected emperor of the Romans owing to his graceful person.

At Athens, for the prize of manliness they selected the handsomest; and at Sparta, the handsomest men and women had especial honours conferred on them.

Plato defines it: "Beauty is a lively, shining, and glittering brightness, resulting from effused good, by ideas, seeds, reasons, shadows, stirring up our minds, that by this good they may be united and made one."

Hogarth enumerates as elements of beauty: fitness, variety, uniformity, simplicity, intricacy, and quantity;" and that figures formed by *curved lines* (see note, pp. 98, 99) are more beautiful than those formed by straight lines and angles.

"Motion," says Dr. Blair, "furnishes another source of beauty, distinct from figure; being of itself pleasing, so that bodies in motion are, *cæteris paribus*, preferred. In general," he continues, "motion in a straight line is less beautiful than that in an undulating direction; and motion upwards is also commonly more agreeable than motion downwards."

busy multitude, passing and repassing, and jostling one another with perfect good breeding and *suaviter in modo.*

The display of goods of every description was perfectly gorgeous, and their arrangement was peculiar, for the proper comprehension of which it will be necessary to briefly describe the street—for I suppose I must so term it—in which we found ourselves. It consisted of an immense broad pavement, stretching far away into the heart of the capital. The houses on either side were of uniform architecture, all built of minica, and their cornices, friezes, entablatures, and architraves, formed a series of grand perspective lines which carried the vision of the spectator to the portico of the palace I have already noticed.

The pavement itself was composed of a semi-opaque material like chalcedony, inlaid with representations of flowers in their natural colours, reminding one of the tessalated specimens of Roman art, only there was no chance of the traffic despoiling them

of their beauty, for they possessed an innate power of self-replenishment.

Upon this superb floor, in itself a work of exquisite art, were erected, in various designs, the most elegant little edifices conceivable, in which, and around which, were arranged the manufactures of the country, consisting of goods of every imaginable shape, texture, use, colour, and substance. In truth, these buildings were the shops of Heliopolis, and the owners thereof resided in the adjacent houses.

There were several of these broad, terrace-like streets, meeting at one point, and between the radiating lines were lesser streets, describing by their arrangement peculiar mathematical figures, built according to certain known laws of proportion, and by this means it was impossible for people to lose their way; for seeing a part involved the necessity of knowing the whole. Indeed, all the Helionites possessed an intuitive knowledge of the definitions, axioms, postulates,

problems, theorems, propositions, constructions, and hypotheses, as laid down by the great masters of their mathematical sciences; so that the impossibility of losing themselves in a city constructed on pure geometrical principles, will be at once conceived. So accurate were the instantaneous calculations of these gifted people, that, if an individual were selected from the ordinarily-well educated classes, his eyes blindfolded, and then led to any part of the vast metropolis, he had only to lay his hand on the wall of a house, and, by thus ascertaining the degree of its angle, were it never so obtuse, he would immediately render you his exact whereabouts. In fact, one of his single thoughts was an entire Euclid.

The absence of vehicles and their attendants, bustle and noise, surprised me not a little; but Alûtedon replied, that every description of public and private conveyances was *below* us, and that several pretty little side-passages, or slopes, which I had observed,

led down to a second highway traversed by the said vehicles. With us, on earth, this must necessarily have been a tunnel, or subterraneous passage; but the reader must be obliging enough to dismiss from his mind any idea of a dark way underground, dripping with moisture, and redolent of dank smells, since (like a profound thinker) the deeper one descended in this sphere, the more luminous all things became, and in the present case the effect was strange enough when some huge carriage, driven below, cast its shadow on the pavement whereon we walked. I asked Alûtedon to permit me to investigate this lower road, and, complying with my request, he led the way down one of the openings I before mentioned, and we soon found ourselves amongst carriages of every denomination. Attached to the conveyances, however, were neither wheels nor horses, the level motion of the ground, and its hard, polished surface, dispensing with the necessity of the first, and a curious internal

arrangement, being the substitute for the second. Thus, strange to relate, the carriages were propelled without cattle, by the mere *will* of the driver. An internal electric apparatus was so delicately formed, and so easily adjusted, that the desire of the coachman acted as force upon the machinery inside. In truth, the act of volition was in the coachman; muscles and nerves were the various portions of the engine; and the result was motion to the whole in whatever direction was needful.

It was very surprising to watch the different effects of the will of those drivers, whose *physique* differed in degrees of power. There some powerful fellow drove an enormous van, with a speed and *aplomb* which suggested a robust and vigorous nature. There a party, perhaps of delicate ladies, followed in his wake, *their* coachman skilfully driving them at a leisure and genteel pace, owing to the more refined nature of *his* will. There again was seen the driver of a public conveyance, forcing his carriage

onward with an easy and *nonchalant* air, the result of *his* will; and there, yet anon, was the slow country driver, having arrived with a cart-load of some strange production from hyperborean parts, propelling *his* vehicle with a sort of stolid apathy, highly suggestive of bucolic habits. In short, instead of beasts of burden to draw the different carriages of the town, the force of the driver's determination urged them forward; and this force acting, as already explained, by means of galvanic agency, produced an effect, which, though seemingly very marvellous, is not a whit more so than the power which enables us to put our hand to our head, or to walk across the room.

It must be mentioned that the drivers of these locomotives sat behind on the roof, like the driver of our Hansom cabs, and in lieu of wheels they had curved shafts, like the keel of a boat, or the steel of a skate. The form and material of the carriages differed in every degree; and some, owing to an arrangement of undulatory lines, in har-

mony and proportion, were very beautiful. The road on which they ran was composed of minica, the surface being rendered as hard as steel and smooth as glass, so that, to sum up the whole, the carriage-roads were like a glaciarium and the conveyances like sledges, but driven by neither deer, dogs, nor horses, but by that sterner power, the will, desire, inclination, determination, or resolution, of a male Helionite.

[1] The correct composition of curves is so paramount an essential in art, that I must again beg leave to refer to the subject. The reader will find the remarks of Mr. Owen Jones in the Guide Book to the Crystal Palace redolent of matter for reflection, few and brief as his observations necessarily are. Indeed, he lays down principles of art so clearly and so concisely that they become in his hands axioms and postulates. Thus he says: "Harmony of form consists in the proper balancing and contrast of the straight, the inclined, and the curved." Or again: "Composition of curves will be most agreeable where the mechanical means of describing them shall be least apparent." He then goes on to state, that at the best periods of art, all mouldings and ornaments were founded on curves of the higher order, such as conic sections; whilst, when art declined, circles and compass-work were much more dominant. The *people* for whom these books are more especially written, will do well to ponder upon these matters, by no means above their comprehension, for that science can scarcely be called abstruse which can always be illustrated by nature's simplest works—such as the bend of a flower-stem, or the tracery of a leaf.

The class of men answering to those we term "cabmen, cads, conductors, and omnibus-drivers," were highly-educated and refined gentlemen, and they drove you wherever you desired for a polite speech, or agreeable sentiment.

The manner of hiring a public vehicle was in this wise. When you required a conveyance you descended from the broadway or terrace appropriated to the promenaders, down to the roadway, the exclusive domain of Jehu. When here, you walked a little way on, and up drives a cab, and the gentleman who propels it, reverentially bows, and expresses a hope that you are not fatigued. To this you reply you feel a little so, but you beg that he will not give himself any concern on your account. Upon which, with alacrity he dismounts from his seat, opens the door of his vehicle, and earnestly presses you to honour his carriage with your presence. You here demur a little, but in the most courtier-like terms, till you observe that you are likely to give the gentleman cause for sorrow

if his offer be longer refused, whereupon you yield gracefully to the reiterated courtesy, and enter the carriage, intimating that on no account will you permit him to drive you urther than a portion of your journey. Benign smiles are his only response, and he sets you down at your journey's end, however great the distance. When you alight, you give utterance to some charming little aphorism, which is the only guerdon our Chesterfield expects, and in return he utters some exquisite line of poetry, and with mutual good wishes and amicable gestures, you separate, satisfied and charmed with each other. Cabbie drives off delighted with the urbanity of his "fare," and "fare" enters his domicile, only regretting his short acquaintance with "cabbie."

By degrees I became used to the novel sight of carriages without horses, and the manner in which some dashed by, or suddenly drew up, proved that although the cause of their progress was a delicate sympathy between immaterial force, and mate-

rial agency, yet even under these circumstances practice was essential, and also a proper discipline of the efforts of will.

Satisfied with our investigation, we ascended one of the adjacent slopes, and stood once more on the beautiful piazza.

And now I approach a theme at which my heart fails; and though I do not think it can be said that I pause where description is necessary; but, on the contrary, I fear it may be urged that in this particular I am audacious in the extreme; yet I now shrink for the first time, so utterly inadequate is the most glowing language, to impart an idea of the beauty of the women of the Sun.

Had I the power to conjure up the shades of all those lovely creatures who have dazzled the age in which they lived—could I unite in one form the loveliness of Thargelia, the Milesian; or that of Anytis, the sister of Xerxes; or the charms of Timosa, the Egyptian; or the graces of Zenopithea, the Peloponnesian; or the sweet coquetterie of Pantica of Cyprus; or the voluptuous beauty of

Herodice; nay, could I concentrate all the exquisite forms of those ladies, whose personal charms made a paradise of Tenedos, or of Chalcis, still I should fail to impart an idea of the beauty of the daughters of the Sun—still, delineation with useless palette would limp far in the rear, calling in vain upon memory or imagination for assistance.

Every action of these daughters of light conveyed an idea as much of the poetry, as of the music of motion; and, could sound have expressed their movements, ravishing melodies would have waited on their steps.

Their mode of life, and the fine and delicate food on which they lived, imparted excessive delicacy to their personal appearance, while their features wore that sort of intellectual finesse of expression so enchanting and so rare. Sometimes a dreamy, spirit-like look would dwell for a moment on their sweet faces, as though the breath from a spirit's lips called up an earnest thought of other spheres, or as if an idea from heaven

itself were about to be stamped there for ever. This, however, was as evanescent as such angelic expressions are ever likely to be, and then succeeded that bright and happy look characteristic generally of the inhabitants, and which, especially on the women's faces, beamed with a brightness almost supernatural.

Health, happiness, and a dainty diet, imparted to their lips a vermeil tint, which seemed to heighten the excessive whiteness of the line of ivory which served them in lieu of teeth; and their long hair was suffered to fall in folds behind, and then was gathered around their polished but soft shoulders, and fastened on their bosoms by a knot tied in a very artistic and coquettish manner.

The ordinary dress was simple in the extreme, consisting of only one robe, so ample that it would have covered a space of a hundred yards, and yet so fine, it would have passed through a common-size bracelet.

It was made of some aërial produce, and of course differed in texture and in colour according to the taste of the wearer. Their manner of arranging their simple attire was extremely graceful, and gave occasion for a display of all those little feminine artifices which I perceived were by no means absent even in the Sun. Generally speaking, the robe was gathered together, and thrown across the head, leaving the forehead and the face and back part of the head exposed. Its ample folds falling round their persons would have enveloped them in masses of the fine fabric, but they were caught at the waist, and confined there by a fire-zone, and then suffered to fall around them in ample drapery, while those portions of their dress which might possibly fly asunder were confined by fire-pins, which studded them in regular tiers, and had an effect of great brilliancy. From the knee, downwards, the dress was permitted to remain loose, and thus occasionally, from amid the ample folds, would gleam forth such a polished and per-

fect limb, as would have killed even the Graces with envy to have witnessed.[1]

Their feet were encased in little elastic coverings, something between a modern lady's slipper and a Roman sandal, and one of those pretty shoes coming off accidentally, I observed that the foot itself was a model of form. The manner of managing the folds of the dress around their fair arms, constituted the coquettish part of their dress, and I observed considerable skill was necessary to give the limbs full room for action, without discomposing the graceful fall of this most simple but elegant attire. I should mention that the fire-pins, and zone of the same

[1] The following beautiful picture is from Yonge's translation of "The Deipnosophists:"

"Another, with her robe high round her neck,
Concealed her bosom, but a rent below
Showed all her shapely legs. The graces smiled,
And love, not without hope, did lead me on.
Then on th' inviting asphodel they fell,
Plucking the dark leaves of the violet flower,
And crocus, which, with purple petals rising,
Copies the golden rays of the early sun.
Then, too, the Persian sweetly-smelling marjoram
Stretched out its neck along the laughing meadow."

material, were originally made of igneous matter, its heat expunged, and its beauty and brightness alone remaining fixed indelibly in a seemingly fiery form.

I afterwards discovered that a great number of ornaments were made of this substance, which, differing in every possible degree of colour and tint, sometimes opaque, sometimes clear as crystal, but always with a dash of its mother element running through it, gave occasion for many beautiful combinations for adornment and for use.

Well might the poets of the Sun sing in strains of worship to these Heavenly creatures, as indeed I afterwards discovered they were by no means backward in doing, and they sighed to be changed into a firepin, or implored permission to unfasten the silken locks of their sweet mistresses, just as we have sighed to be "a glove upon that hand," or other more warm demands, for which I refer the curious reader to the poets of all ages and of all times. Ah, reader! has this little passage conjured up to the

view of your imagination the magic word LOVE? Are you anxious to know whether in Heliopolis flourished the Erôs and Anterôs? Whether here, as on Earth, it was true what Valesius and Melancthon made out from Plato, commencing "Duæ veneres, duo amores:" or whether Lucian's division be as fitting for the Solites as for the Earthites, when he says, "One love was born in the sea, which is as various and raging in young men's breasts as the sea itself; the other is that golden chain which was let down from heaven, and with a divine fury ravisheth our souls, made to the image of God, and stirs us up to comprehend the innate and incorruptible beauty to which we were once created?"[1]

Concerning these mysteries, as far as I may venture, I will discourse anon, for it was my lot to soon experience this master-passion in all its force; but at this moment I am still with Alûtedon, in one of the chief

[1] Beroaldus expresses this in a so-called epigram, and Origen speaks also of two loves, while Austin makes a threefold division of the passion.—See BURTON'S *Anatomy*, part iii. § 1.

thoroughfares of Heliopolis, and where a short while we must remain.

I was naturally so astonished at all I saw, and questions crowded on my mind so fast, that I walked on with my companion, taciturn and bewildered.

I now perceived that at intervals, along this great highway, were erected figures of surpassing excellence, sculptured, I imagined, by the most eminent artists, whose conceptions of the ideal world were grand and sublime, in proportion to the grandeur and sublimity of things with which they were familiar.

Groups of figures of gods and demi-gods (according to an elevated and spiritual mythology) were chiselled in a material whiter than snow, and capable of absorbing the colours of light according to the desire of the artist, without a direct application of pigments.[1] This power, however, was seldom

[1] However startling to our ideas of the pure and severe in art, there is no longer a doubt that the Greeks painted their statues. Not only have we the authority of ancient writers for so saying—as for example, Pliny (lib. xxxiv. cap. xv.), Plato (De Repub. lib. iv.), Plutarch (Quæst. Roman. xcviii.), Virgil (in an epigram and in the 7th eclogue), but modern travellers have

used by the artists, since the sculptors in the Sun considered that the innate idea of the soul was too sublime to require the aid of the external world; indeed, so far was this notion carried, that the ornamentation of rooms, articles of decoration, and sculpture generally, possessed merely an aërial outline, as elsewhere described.

My attention was distracted from these works of art by an enormous fountain, which, instead of throwing up jets of water, cast, from the luminous depths below, a column of light,[1] which at a certain elevation

seen the remains of paint upon statues and upon architectural decorations. The Swedish traveller, Akerblad, says: "I am convinced that the practice of colouring marble statues and buildings was much more frequent than is supposed. The second time I visited Athens, I had opportunity of narrowly inspecting the frieze of the Temple of Theseus, and I came away convinced it had been painted." Quatremère de Quincey refers especially to the Apollo in the Louvre, made of Pentelic marble, almost all over the naked surfaces of which a trace of red was faintly perceptible: the same with a Diana at Versailles; but he adds, "these traces grow daily fainter." The eyes and mouth of the colossal Pallas de Velletri still retain the violet colour. —*Vide* a *résumé* by Mr. G. H. Lewis, of historical eminence, in favour of the colouring of Greek sculpture.

[1] An-oth signified the fountain of light, by the Egyptians abbreviated into Nath and Neith. The Athenians who came from Sais, in Egypt, were so called from this deity, whom they

abruptly ceased, and fell into a thousand sprays, passing as they descended into forms of every conceivable shape and colour, and finally, as they came in soft contact with the ground, disappeared like falling snow-flakes on water. The light which composed this and similar springs, of course differed in quality from the light of the atmosphere, and were of a tint unlike anything I had ever seen. Others, again, were differently formed, and threw up aërial flowers, which, glowing for a moment in prismatic beauty, gradually blended with the atmosphere and faded into the general neutral tint. To this, again, succeeded a never-ceasing irruption of fresh phantom bouquets, which went through the same exquisite transformation, producing an effect too magical to describe. Crowds of people were gathered round these *jets d'air;* for their marvellous shapes

expressed in the Ionian manner Athene. The word nymph owes its derivation to ain-omphe, an "oracular fountain," contracted by the Greeks to numph, or nymph. Naiades, in the same way, came from Ain-ades, fountain of the Sun.—See BRYANT'S *Analysis of Mythology*.

of beauty—now dying, now reviving—attracted the admiration of even those accustomed to the display.[1]

The real blooming flowers, however, which flourished in the Sun exceeded (as Nature ever exceeds the highest effort of Art) the loveliness of ingeniously formed rivals. Lavish as Alma Mater ever is in reference to all she touches in our own dear little planet, profuse though her hand, gorgeous her painting, and munificent her gifts, she

[1] Those interested in descriptions of curious fountains should refer to Pliny (lib. ii. 103), who describes a spring near the Temple of Jupiter, at Dodona, which, though cold itself, *ignites flax*. He also mentions two more; one in India, called Lycos, and the other at Ecbatana. The hot springs of Iceland, at Geyser and Reikum, and that of Opalsk, in Kamschatka, are too well known to require notice. Lucretius (lib. vi. 548) says:

"Esse apud Hammonis fanum fons luce diurnâ
Frigidus, et calidus nocturno tempore, fertur."

Camöens refers to an inflammable fountain in his Lusiad; and Ovid and Virgil mention fresh-water springs arising from the middle of the ocean, untainted by saline particles. Strabo treats this latter statement as mere fiction; but it is to be hoped no modern critic will so deem the wonderful fountains in the text, which might with propriety be termed "Ainal Schams," the Arabic for fountains of the Sun. I beg permission to observe that no *bon mot* is intended by the use of the word *Schams*.

is positively a miser towards us, in comparison with her prodigal expenditure in the orb of light.

Not to speak of colour, form, or use, the flowers of this kingdom possessed a peculiarity unknown to the sweet petals of our dewy-lipped blossoms, consisting of an expression I can only term *spiritual*. Some of the most beautiful of these fair productions seemed positively to be aware of a Creator, and their look of tender pensiveness (quite distinct from organic structure) was a religion in itself. Indeed, a close compact between religion and poetry, written by Nature's hand in hieroglyphics of buds and blossoms, and endorsed by perfection as witness and testator, would be terms scarcely too hyperbolic to describe the floral loveliness in the Sun; or, if the simile be unduly extravagant, I must ask the indulgent reader to remember that Pindar (Olymp. ii.) declares, "Like gold the flowrets glisten;" Beattie, in his "Minstrel," says, "Where flowers in living lustre blow;" and Pope speaks of their aromatic *souls*.

Shops where they sold the ordinary perfume-food were generally more crowded than any of the others, and at first it seemed very strange to hear some customer exclaim, "I think I'll take a little so-and-so" (naming some odour); "my breakfast off such-and-such" (naming another) "did not agree with me." Or, "We dine late to-day; you had better not fast too long; try a little of this, it was distilled only yesterday in the Valley of Sweet Smells." Or, "Be good enough to send me home a dozen of the same sort as the last, though I do not think the aroma quite as good as it used to be." Or perhaps, in less conventional accents, some gallant to his fair companion, "Teach the breath of this odour a new and sweeter fragrance by thy lips' contact;" and then the demoiselle's response, owing, as is generally the case with young ladies' observations, so much more to manner than to matter, "No, really—I cannot—thank you—that will do—it takes my breath away." Into one of these emporiums Alûtedon and myself strolled, and the department of parfumerie would have

used up a whole continent of "sweet gul," prairies of mignionette, steppes of lavender, and vast tracts of those mysterious flowers which are supposed to form the basis of eau-de-Cologne. These various volatile odours all differed in quality. Some would intoxicate; some were narcotic; some were exhilarating like green tea; some sweet; some sour; and, indeed, just as articles of food differ with us, so these articles of nourishment varied in genius, class, and kind.[1] Those which composed the ordinary diet of the people were of a very nourishing description, and were easily procurable from plantations of flowers grown on purpose; while others were of a rare and costly description, served only at the table of the highly educated.

After sufficiently examining the various bulb-like flasks which confined their various essences, we proceeded on our way, stopping occasionally to admire the fabrics displayed in the shops, a proper classification and description of which would fill a

[1] See note, page 68.

cyclopædia. The vendors of the numerous goods, as well as those making purchases, evidently perceived I was a stranger from a strange planet; but instead of staring or looking astonished, their attention and civility were, if possible, increased, not with a view to induce me to buy their goods, but from that obliging disposition and good breeding so remarkable amongst the Helionites generally. The word "purchase" will doubtless dispose the intelligent reader to learn what description of coin was given in exchange for the various articles of commerce; and all I can tell here is, they were similar to those which our friend "Cabbie" took for payment—viz., the intangible ones of moral reflection, axioms, sentiments, and quotations, valuable according to the weight and fineness of the metal of thought.[1] A person

[1] According to Isidorus: "Moneta ita appellatur, quia monet nè qua fraus in pondere vel metallo fiat."

Pope has said that "words are the counters by which men represent their thoughts." Mr. Pinkerton, in his work on Medals, says: "That to a man of poetical imagination the Roman coins must prove an ample source of intellectual delight by means of the personations and symbols which are

desiring a particular article called to his recollection some of those best forms of imparting wisdom, which he had gleaned during his reading in the literature of his country; the consequence being, the more highly-educated classes were enabled to command the luxuries of life in exchange for the riches of their well-stored memories; whereas the humble, or the comparatively ignorant, could only produce homely and trite sayings, for an exchange of homely, but useful, goods.

Those who set their hearts upon some extremely *recherché* little commodity, were perhaps unable to enter a shop and purchase it at once, the purse of their recollection not being full enough, but, like the Sibyl of old, they were obliged to retire to their occult leaves at home—a fresh issue from the mint called brain—and there either formed new combinations of ideas for themselves, sufficiently excellent to purchase the desired object, or else, for the same purpose, they

to be found on their reverse." And the same may be said of a substitution of legends for figures.

selected "elegant extracts" from the best authors.

The rejection or acceptance of this verbal money, or as it were the "testimonia probatæ monetæ," rested of course with the vendors of the goods coveted, who were necessarily excellent critics and judges, inasmuch as before they could open a shop, a license from government was necessary, and this certificate was only obtainable by passing through a severe academical examination. Those who came out "in honours" sold the highest class of goods—exquisite works of art in which the imagination had revelled; the same principle guiding others in the articles they were to sell, according to a sliding scale of capacity and endowments. Thus the class we term "shopkeepers," and which in Napoleon's lips was a term of opprobrium, were in the Sun the holders of certain commodities in *trust*, only parting with them for those forms of thought which tended to the refinement and elevation of the people's minds, manners, and morals.

I ought to add that these aphorisms, or axioms, or quotations were, when offered by the vendee, written on a sort of indestructible papyrus, made of asbestos and sedge leaves,[1] and when accepted by the vendor were stamped with his particular monogram, and circulated at once.

When Alûtedon imparted this curious method of procuring the luxuries and necessaries of life, I felt an unconquerable desire to purchase some of the beautiful articles I saw around me, were it never so trifling; and this wish I no sooner expressed than he exclaimed,

"By all means, dear Heliophilus, summon up a quotation or two that you consider most beautiful from any of your writers on earth, and I will translate to the best of my ability."

Upon this we entered a shop containing a selection of fancy goods too exquisite to

[1] The Egyptians manufactured cloth from the fibres of asbestos, for the purpose of wrapping up the bodies of the dead when exposed on the funeral pyre: the uses of the "cyperus papyrus" need no remark.

describe. I at once selected a fire-pin for a lady's cloud mantle, as the thought crossed me, possessed of such a little treasure, I might appropriately bestow it one of the odd days to come.

The learned Aristarchus, who presided at the stall, smiled, and looked all encouragement.

And now, dear reader, let me respectfully ask of you, What would you have done under similar circumstances? Should you have reverted to your school-days, and have offered at the critic's shrine some shred of copybook wisdom, whilom pinned to your memory by pot-hooks and hangers? or think you you should have resorted to your small college experiences, and drawn upon the glorious compounds of the Greek Dramatists; or for verbal honey-drops to the "Kisses" of Secundus; or for dainty love-morsels to Aristænetus? Or to Pindar, perhaps, for some elegant expressions dashed off in a word or two; or for a tender fragment to Bion, Moschus, or Musæus;

or to Theocritus, for those exquisite bucolic strains — those delicious reed-notes, which have found echoes in our poets' hearts from time past, even unto to-day. Or to Catullus, when Atys[1] is his theme; or for a tender morsel to the gifted and love-sick Tibullus; or for a flower from a manure-heap to Martial, or Petronius Arbiter; or maybe to the familiar springs of rich description in Virgil or Ovid; or possibly to Horace, for one of his own *disjecta membra poetæ*. Then, in a sudden plunge from the ancients to the moderns, perhaps Mr. Gray might receive a hasty visit for his celebrated line:

"The bloom of young desire, and purple light of love:"[2]

or, trying back a little, that glorious song of

[1] Ramsay declares that this is the most remarkable poem in Latin literature.

[2] Dr. Good would unquestionably have presented this line to the shopman in the Sun, for he declares that nothing in Greek or Persian poetry equals it; at the same time he quotes Tasso and Catullus, and Albinovanus and Milton, to show that the word purple was used by the best poets as expressive of every object beautiful and delicate.

rare old Ben Jonson might have found favour, though it *is* a direct imitation of the Greek of Philostratus; but what, in the whole range of English minstrelsy, more charming than the stanza—

> "The thirst that in the soul doth rise
> Doth ask a drink divine;
> Drink to me only with thine eyes,
> And I will pledge with mine."

For myself, all I know is, I never felt so thoroughly puzzled in my life, and memory beat her wings with no little force against my brain, to startle some songster from its long rest therein. Such a flock uprose at the disturbance, I was quite distracted, and instead of singling out my bird, like a good sportsman, I fired at the covey and missed everything. Off they all fluttered, their rich and rare plumage glittering in the sun, Miltonian wings, Shakspearian tails, and Spenserian song. Not, however, to strain the metaphor, I really suffered in no small degree from an *embarras de richesses*, but luckily, when confusion seemed doubly con-

fused, I remembered an exquisite line of Cowley's, which had always appeared to me one of the most beautiful in the English tongue, clothing as it does a refined and exquisite idea, with language as delicate and as appropriate as the colour which dresses the lily is adapted for the lily herself. I therefore paused no longer, but wrote on a small tablet the following familiar lines from Cowley's Hymn to Light:

"The virgin lilies in their white
Are clad but with the lawn of almost naked light."[1]

Alûtedon glanced at the quotation, and exclaimed, "Yes, indeed, this is very beautiful, a very lily of thought, and is worthy a better translator than myself." Whereupon he considered for a moment, and then presented the two lines, written in his own language of music, to my smiling friend who

[1] If any of my readers will so far honour me as to select any little poetic coin which they consider more perfect than the quotation from Cowley, and will send it to my publisher, I shall be delighted to exchange it for goods at any of the shops of the Sun, and will not charge a commission.

presided at the counter. No sooner had he perused the bars, than he exclaimed, "Take what you will from my stores, oh! stranger, for the best is worthily purchased, and your visit is an honour to me and mine."

"Indeed," I answered, "I require nothing but this pretty fire-pin, for, after all, the coin I offer bears an inscription not my own."

"There is a merit in judicious appropriation," said the gentleman very politely, "and the utterer of a good thing is always under an obligation to those who pass it round. It is as wrong to keep the bottle standing"—(here he named an exquisite, but slightly intoxicating, odour)—"as to pack up in your memory a number of notable things, all for your own consumption."

I bowed at this courteous speech, accepted from his hands two igneous brooches instead of one, and, thanking the gentle and learned shopman, I left his stall with a very elevated opinion of myself and of things in general.

"Ah," exclaimed Alûtedon, seeing my

good spirits, "how beautiful is that arrangement in the moral world which makes us all inheritors of the thoughts of others!"

"But how seemingly unjust that same law," I replied, "which often refusing honour, affluence, or even competence to an author, lavishes on posterity an unbounded and increasing wealth."[1]

"True," said my friend, "but who, save

[1] Milton and his widow realised the sum of *twenty-eight pounds* for the copyright of Paradise Lost!

"Cervantes is supposed," says Disraeli the elder, "to have wanted food."

Camöens died in an hospital at Lisbon, a fact to be found in the 1st edition of the Lusiad, in the possession of Lord Holland.

Tasso alludes to his distress when entreating his cat to assist him by the lustre of her eyes, having no candle to see to write his verses: "Non avendo candele per iscrivere i suoi versi!"

Alphonso enabled Ariosto to build a small house, but the interior betokened poverty. The poet, in his satires, complains of the bondage of dependence and penury.

Racine found Corneille dying, deprived of a little broth. Louis XIV. sent him a small sum of money.

Mr. Malone attempts to show that Spenser enjoyed a small pension, but it is probable the instalments were not due at the time of his great distress, produced by the disaffection of Tyrone. Memorials of some weight concur in representing the poet as ending his life of vicissitude and suffering at an inn, or promiscuous lodging-house, in King-street, Westminster, on

the authors themselves, have enjoyed the unspeakable delights of conception?"

"Ogni medalia ha il suo reverso," said I, inwardly wondering whether Alûtedon's knowledge of foreign languages was confined to English. At this moment I happened to look upward, and perceived the clouds were gathering over our heads; the effect of which was most astounding, at the same time most beautiful, for every cloud acted as a reflector to the rising rays of light, casting a thousand different tints on their soft surfaces, and mottling the whole firmament with a sort of richly-painted land-

the 16th of January, 1598. The cause of his death was probably that disease of the spirits—that extinction of all earthly hope—called a broken heart. Otway, Chatterton, and Savage are names to be added to the sad list; and for an article on the subject, see Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature."

"While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,
No generous patron would a dinner give;
See him when starved to death, and turned to dust,
Presented with a monumental bust.
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown;
He asked for bread, and he received a stone."

SAMUEL WESTLEY, *on the Epitaph in Westminster Abbey inscribed on Butler's Monument.*

scape, like a mirage presenting some gorgeous place afar off. Every breath of air varied the picture, as if nature were shaking an aërial kaleidoscope, and nothing within or without the realms of fancy at all came up to its changing beauties.

"Now," said Alûtedon, "you will be able to imagine how it is our fabrics are so varied and so beautiful—at least," added he, modestly, "you are so kind as to express your approval—for owing to the peculiar nature of these clouds we are enabled, as I before explained, to manufacture our goods, and the colours are preserved as you now see them. To-day will be a great day, and our looms will be busy at work," continued he, "for it is only occasionally these useful portions of our firmament make their appearance. Presently they will change their aspect, and we had better take shelter, for it is going to rain!"

I was rather startled at rain falling in the kingdom of the Sun; but I remembered

there were seas, and oceans, and rivers, and that evaporation could take place by internal as well as external heat.

"But how is it, my dear Alûtedon," I asked, "that those beautiful clouds, which with us are simply water in suspension, should contain some solid quality to enable you to admit them to your looms, and to fabricate such exquisite materials?"

"Why," replied he, "it is in this wise. An exceedingly fine material is generated over the continents of the Sun, and is thrown off by an internal chemical action, in infinitesimally small invisible atoms, and these, rising in the air, become at a certain height conglomerated, and by the attraction of cohesion form into a sort of delicate spongy material into which the watery particles of the atmosphere become absorbed. They then sail over our heads as you perceive, but increasing in volume as they mutually attract one another, they are gradually pressed side to side, and gently dis-

charge their contents in the form of small drops, or rain.[1] See," said he, "it has commenced."

In parts the clouds had become more compact, and had lost their various beautiful hues, at the same time a very fine shower descended. The women upon this scampered into the shops, or down the slopes into their carriages; and the men, throwing their mantles over their heads, took it very philosophically, and, I must say, watched rather closely the lovely ankles of the ladies, which glanced from the folds of their dress as they hurried into shelter. Many of the young beaux appeared much delighted; and what with laughter and blushes, and little acts of gallantry, I considered the passing shower as delightful, as its mode of aërial formation was strange.

It was, however, very soon over; the

[1] The art of "lying like truth" ought to be well understood by the writers of imaginary travels: an art which Æschinas declared Demosthenes possessed, for he even imitated the manner and gestures of imaginary individuals. Swift and Defoe adapted this "natural style" to perfection.

fibrous portions of the clouds again expanded into the finest attenuations, and were wafted to the higher regions of the air, in a few days, perhaps, to again condense, and to again repeat their refreshing duties.

"If," said Alûtedon, "we were at this moment on the summit of the hill from whence we descended, we should perceive a number of fan-like machines thrown out at the top of the manufactories, employed in arresting the various fibres of the clouds, and taking advantage of the supply of fresh material which the sky had brought them."

Other matters, too numerous to mention, diverted our attention into fresh channels, and at length we stood upon the flight of steps of the palace of Prince Helionax, the Sovereign of Heliopolis.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.

THE PALACE—AUTHORITIES TO CONSULT—ELECTION OF A RULER — AN AUDIENCE — HELIONAX — LOVE INCREASES BEAUTY — SUN-BIRDS OF CUVIER — CHARMING LIFE — MACHINE CRITICS—LITERARY REFLEXIONS—PICTURES—ROYAL COURTESY—HELIOTROPE—HELIOSWEET—THE QUINTETTE—DANGEROUS ADMIRATION — THE BANQUET — BEAUTY AND WIT—TERRENE AFFAIRS—THE LAST DUST—SLIGHT INEBRIATION—SPECULATIONS—A SONG—TABLEAUX—AËRIAL CARRIAGE—DREAMS.

Ascending the steps, we entered a portico supported by colossal Caryatides, illustrative of art and science. The drapery on these figures was so formed, that the closest inspection was necessary to assure the beholder they were not a solid material.

Crowds of people were passing in and out of the palace, and attendants in gorgeous apparel were there, not from a display of

ostentation, but for the purpose of showing courtesy to strangers, and explaining the intricacies of the edifice.

We had now entered an enormous hall, the floor of which was composed of slabs of sapphire, but of a more delicate tint, while the subdued light from the depths below imparted the effect of a second atmosphere lying at our feet. The walls of this chamber were ornamented with allegorical female figures employed in pastoral avocations, such as weaving flowers into festoons, or gathering fruit overhead; while both fruit and flowers were made of precious stones, of so peculiar a sort that they underwent a change of colour and structure according to the season of the year —thus enabling Art to follow Nature even in her mutations. The roof was domed, and from its arcuature fell gracefully down stalactite-looking pendules, which, owing to the serrated nature of their surfaces, produced an iridescence, or almost a coruscation of lustre, beautiful in the extreme.[1]

[1] That the production of colour depends on the nature of

On either side of the roof were hangings of a curious texture, something after the fashion of the famed Carbasina vela, used during the Apollinarian games, and these at night-time being drawn around the walls and over the flowers, gave the signal for a perfect blaze of illumination to pour forth from hundreds of artificial stars set in the ceiling of this magnificent hall:

> "From the arched roof,
> Pendant by subtle magic many a row
> Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
> With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
> As from a sky."

If, however, I were to attempt to describe all the splendour of this palace of Heliopolis, I should only surfeit the reader with a repetition of gorgeous reflexions. Should he delight in such paintings, I would respectfully refer him to Lucan for a recital of the splendour of Cleopatra's palace; or to Suetonius, to learn how Nero overlaid his

the surface on which light falls, has been beautifully illustrated by Sir David Brewster, who showed by experiment that an impression of mother-of-pearl taken on sealing-wax exhibited the superficial iridescence of the former material.

palace with gold; or to Homer, who represents the palace of Menelaus as tesselated

"With amber, silver, ivory, and gold."

Or, if these content him not, a draught from Sadi's apophthegms may refresh him, where the Persian poet's description of the sky, will serve equally well for an architectural picture:[1]

"Behold this dome, with gold profusely veined,
This massive roof, with pillars unsustained!
This vast pavilion of the rolling sphere,
These azure lamps, that burn for ever clear."

Or, taking another quaff from the fountain-head of all description, let him return to the Odyssey for Homer's painting of the palace of Alcinous; as Aristarchus wished to write,

"Such is the palace of Olympian Jove."

Through vestibules, and corridors, and passages, Alûtedon and myself strolled, seeing all, admiring all, till, entering a larger chamber

[1] Vitruvius enumerates twelve qualities necessary to constitute a good architect: "that he be docile and ingenious; well educated; skilled in designing, in geometry, optics, arithmetic, history, philosophy, music, medicine, law, and astronomy."

than the last, we, somewhat suddenly, found ourselves in the presence of the Prince himself. It was evident no formal introduction was necessary, and I was surprised at the facility of intercourse which his subjects enjoyed; but such was the people's wisdom and good-breeding, that they never intruded into the royal presence except when rare and particular occasions warranted their seeking the Prince, who exercised a sort of paternal control over their affairs.

Alûtedon here explained to me that the election of the sovereign depended solely upon intellectual endowments and personal beauty;[1] or perhaps I ought to omit to mention the latter, for in this strange country the higher the intellect the more fully developed was the beauty of external form.

No prince could reign more than ten years *consecutively;* but his having been elected once, by no means incapacitated him from a second elevation to the throne, provided

[1] See note, p. 103.

during his reign he had so improved his opportunity, that he again bore away the palm for every species of accomplishment.

These examinations every ten years caused, as may well be imagined, the greatest excitement amongst the people; for not only did they depend, as a representative body, upon the sequel, but, by bringing science, art, and literature to a culminating point in the persons of the most proficient scholar, they possessed a standard of excellence by which to measure all other degrees. The electors consisted of the most learned men of the kingdom; but it so happened that sometimes the candidate sent in papers so erudite, that the savants themselves were puzzled. When this was the case, recourse was had to foreign assistance, and the whole Sun was scoured for competent examiners. This, of course, did not very often happen, but, as the contingency might occur to the reader, I explain it at once.

At the present moment, Helionax was busy

investigating inventions, examining specimens of art and discoveries in science, and also in conversing with those strangers who, arriving from distant quarters of the Sun, or from other planets, demanded his attention, as much from ethnological reasons as from courtesy and kindness.

The audiences, I found, would last another hour, so I amused myself with studying the peculiarities of those attending the levee, some of whom were evidently of quite a different race to the Helionites, and elicited a subdued but well-bred curiosity from those around.

I need hardly observe that the hour flew away on quick wing, for not only the groups of people excited my attention, but paintings, sculpture, and other familiar modes of decorating a superb interior, were marvels in themselves.

At length the hangers-on began to think they must call again; those who had obtained an audience departed, and I asked Alûtedon

whether we too ought not to retire; but he informed me I was to be honoured by a private interview with the Prince, and that most likely I should be expected to remain to dinner.

The rooms had now become tolerably well cleared, and I approached the Prince, literally awe-struck by his personal beauty. Apelles never imagined such a face, Phidias never sculptured such a form.

At the moment I drew nigh he was holding converse with an astronomer from foreign parts, who was explaining to a demonstration that the Earth never was, nor ever will be, inhabited. When the Prince beheld Alûtedon and myself, his countenance brightened—bright though it ever was—and he exclaimed:

"Ah! here we have a wanderer from the very planet my learned friend declares is a little barren globe, without a soul upon it."

At this remark the astronomer, presenting me with a book, bowed and walked away,

sustaining his dignity by grave silence—a course highly to be recommended to philosophers generally. The Prince, however, took no notice of his withdrawal, and he continued, in terms full of sweetness, "At least our visitor shall become one of us humble denizens of the Sun, if a cordial welcome, and an effort to please, can make him feel a guest and a brother."

I really was quite unable to resist the temptation of bending on one knee and pressing the Prince's hand to my lips. There was something so affable, so captivating, in his manner, and withal, such a vast power of intellect beaming over his beautiful features, that I really felt as embarrassed as though I were in the presence of a god. This perceiving, he took me by the hand and exclaimed: "You are here our equal, dear friend, except in such small matters where my knowledge exceeds yours in the affairs of Helios; and since you bring with you a vast amount of lore from another sphere,

an interchange of information will benefit us both, and will, I hope, cement the friendly sentiments which I believe we shall ultimately entertain for one another."

Many of those who stood around here came forward, and bade me welcome amongst them, giving me invitations to their houses, expressed in a manner which would better be described by the word kind than civil, and which had evidently more to do with the heart, than with mere conventional politeness.

The Prince, who for a moment had turned away to speak to some one else, again addressed me, and expressed his desire that I should dine with him in the afternoon; adding, with rather a sly smile, "I believe your periods of social intercourse on earth never occur during a dinner or other meal; if so, you must pardon our habits, and be punctual at seven o'clock. Alûtedon will, in the mean time, show you over our palace."

In some confusion I accepted, in the best

terms I could summon, this invitation, and bowing to those around me, felt a little relieved when the audience had terminated.

"Well," asked Alûtedon, "what think you of our gracious ruler?"

"That he is simply a god."

"Not, I trust, one of your mythological deities?"

"Is he married?" I somewhat evasively asked.

"Certainly; to the Princess Heliotrope, the most lovely woman in the world."

"Shall I ever see her?"

"Yes, at dinner."

"Alûtedon," I said, "tell me candidly what sort of looking person am I?"

He laughed at this question, but replied:

"I do not desire to flatter you, but you are in all respects like one of us; yet anybody can tell you are a stranger, not from any personal peculiarity, but because you look astonished at matters which to us are of no sort of importance."

"As if I came from the provinces?"

"No; you look just what you are, a visitor from another world. But why did you ask if you were good-looking?"

"Because I feel very anxious to know whether I stand any chance of obtaining favour of the ladies."

"That's the reason, is it?" said Alûtedon, with a comic look. "I observed you watching rather wickedly those pretty creatures running out of the shower. Yes," concluded he, "you stand as good a chance as any of us, especially when the *nil admirari* principle takes a greater hold of you than at present."

"At all events, not as regards the fair sex; but pray tell me," I said, "shall I meet any of your Sun belles at dinner to-day?"

"Possibly, and their beaux with them."

"Ah, Alûtedon, you are spiteful."

"By no means; and their beaux *will* be with them, but it doesn't at all follow that you have no chance of supplanting one of them in the favour of the fair."

"Then I should be hated."

"Not at all; our young men are too sensible, and withdraw their pretensions at once —unless the increase of personal beauty proves that mutual love has advanced some stages."

"What *can* you mean?"

"Why," said he, "when one young couple mutually fall in love, truly and fondly, their personal beauty increases to a degree which is apparent to every one, and the more it is visible the more certain is everybody that their affection for one another is sincere."[1]

"And then they marry?"

"Yes."

"How wonderful is this."

"What, that they should marry?"

[1] Even this has a parallel in our own natural history! Cuvier, in defining the character of the family of the Sun-birds, or Cynnyridæ, states: "The plumage of the males and of the females during the intervals of the seasons of love is so different from its nuptial brilliancy that it is difficult to classify the species." These little birds seem to enjoy an existence of more than ordinary delight. They love, and become beautiful: they live upon the nectar of flowers: they are rapid, animated, and graceful in their movements, while their nature is joyous, and all their ways are "ways of pleasantness." Soui-mangat is their Madagascar title.

"No, Alûtedon; but that love should increase loveliness."

"Not at all. With us it is a sentiment that ennobles, refines, and elevates the character, and our inward faculties exhibit themselves in external forms of harmony."

"Does their beauty diminish after marriage?"

Again I perceived a wicked twinkle in Alûtedon's eyes as he answered:

"No; except from the natural decay of age."

"Then young married people are handsomer than single?"

"Certainly; why should they not be? From this, there is a prospective inducement to enter into wedlock; were the single people the most beautiful, present temptation might lead to ulterior unhappiness."

"When is the culminating point of their beauty?"

"At the culminating point of attachment."

"And then it remains transfixed till natural decay diminishes it by degrees?"

"Exactly."

"But in case of disappointments in love?"

"We never have any."

"What! is it sufficient for young people to love one another to be sure of being united?"

"Assuredly; for we should deem it an infringement of one of the Creator's great laws to divorce those whose souls commingle in genuine affection; and since we possess external proof that it is so, there is no difficulty in the matter."

"But in case of death?"

"We only die at a ripe old age."

"How very charming!" I exclaimed; your pursuits are intellectual—you learn to develop beauty in all forms and expressions—your love is a sentiment of divine feeling, with an external form of exposition—your lives peaceful and innocent—your bodies healthy—and your old age the change from

a state of spiritual development to one more exalted and more attenuated still."

"But you must remember our love is tinctured with a little of the dross of you earthites. It is not purely psychological, or else what would become of our population?"

"True," answered I; "but the commingling of such pure beings, whose 'eyes are loadstars, and whose breath sweet air,' must exhibit very little of that erotic love which is necessary to all natural beings."[1]

"Ah," said Alûtedon, "I perceive how it is,—you have already lost your heart."

"At all events, I must be careful, for if I fall in love with the most beautiful women, I shall fall in love with the married ones."

"You will find your affections, dear Heliophilus, very much depend upon reciprocation; but experience is the best in-

[1] And which, as before remarked, Origen, in his comments on the Canticles, separates into two divisions;—one from God, the other from the devil.

structor, and I perceive, quite well, that you will soon be under that tutelage."

While this dialogue had been going on, we had been doing likewise; and I might possibly have expatiated more upon the magnificence of everything around me, but I endeavoured to discipline my wonder according to the gentle hint conveyed by Alûtedon.

We were now ascending a flight of stairs composed of sapphires exquisitely engraved, and my friend, taking me by the arm, led me into a chamber of vast extent, which proved to be neither more nor less than a library; but what struck me as most strange were a number of machines beneath different openings in the roof, apparently of a most complicated description. Before I inquired the meaning of this, I took down one of the volumes, and opening it, I was puzzled to make out the characters.

Alûtedon here informed me that authors had no occasion to employ manual labour in their publications, for they had only to

repeat their ideas aloud, and the vibrations of the air, differing according to the words used, set in motion a very delicate machinery which stamped indelibly the language expressed. Copies could afterwards be taken in any number. These machines, however, refused to perform their office when the author's ideas were either obscure, illogical, old, or erroneous.[1] This criticism by machinery served to keep down the weeds of literature; and when an author found a blank upon the tablet, he usually relinquished that particular train of thought, and either mended it or took to another.

The critics were thus saved a vast amount of labour, and the literature of the Sun was necessarily exceedingly choice.

The machines, which I have already mentioned, at the openings in the roof, seemed now at work, and I asked Alûtedon for an explanation. He replied by approaching

[1] Some good-natured friend is sure to say that it is a matter for regret that the present work had not been printed by the same means; and, for my own sake, I cordially wish it had.

the objects of my curiosity, which I then perceived were an apparatus for transferring, by means of certain known laws of light—what does the reader think?—why, the ideas of all the great men residing in Mercury, Venus, and the Earth! The moment an emanation from the mind of any one of the inhabitants of these worlds arose, either novel, strange, useful, or beautiful, it found a reflexion on the tablets, and became thereon impressed in the language of the writer or thinker, as the case might be. Just as we take photographic pictures by means of a world 95,000,000 of miles distant, so by the power of this apparatus people's ideas in hypercerulean spheres, were transfixed on a highly sensitive preparation; but it should be understood, that only those thoughts found a reflex which were subtle enough to ascend through space, so that all the rubbish and dross remained behind. The ponderosity of the earth may therefore be accounted for.

Alûtedon now pointed out to me the

department of the library in which the earth's contributions were placed, and I must acknowledge I had no reason to be ashamed of the essence and aroma which had been distilled from the minds of our great men and placed in these bibliothecal flasks—quarto et infra. I was, of course, only enabled at that moment to take a very cursory glance at the rich contents of the books; but a most elaborate index, into which I was able just to peep, assured me that an amazing amount of lore, lost to us for ever, was treasured in the volumes around, and amongst other extracts were several from the 700,000 volumes consumed in the Alexandrian library.[1]

"I doubt not," said Alûtedon, "you feel a natural curiosity to know what the transferring instrument is now in the act of

[1] Called by Livy "Elegantiæ regum curæque egregium opus," was founded by Ptolemy Soter, and burnt by order of the Caliph Omar, A.D. 624, because the writings did not agree with the doctrines of the Koran. Gibbon, our own historian, adopting the scepticism of Renaudot, conceives the whole tale as highly improbable.

copying. See if you recognise any old friends."

At this I advanced to the strange-looking machine; but I suppose it would be invidious to say what now occurred; for I recognised the style of living authors, and I must first ask their permission ere I publish those quotations from their works which, by their subtle and refined character, ascended through the regions of space, and found a home in the library of Prince Helionax. Should any writer of the day, therefore, wish to know whether a portion of his literary labours became reflected on the magical tablets I was examining, I shall be delighted to answer him by a private telegraphic message down a sunbeam, if ever I have the opportunity of properly examining the vast collection of literary wealth garnered in this stupendous repository.

From the library we passed into a picture-gallery, the pictures being painted by means of the will of the artist acting on the colours of the atmosphere, and every tint obeyed

his mandate and fell in thin or thick layers, according to the exigencies of his art. Mind was, of course, as necessary in employing this subtle agency as though the colours were put on ordinary canvas by the ordinary means.

The absence of portraits of men was very remarkable, but Alûtedon explained that the male sex considered it a mark of extreme vanity to be represented on canvas, and even the women were only painted when the artist found it necessary to introduce them into compositions displaying all his best resources of poetry and imagination.

"Not long since," said Alûtedon, "I was passing through a village a few miles from the city, and I observed a crowd of children jeering and running after a young man, who in vain tried to get rid of his tormentors by throwing perfumes and flowers in their way. They were, however, not to be bribed; and being at length near enough to hear what they were exclaiming, I laughed exceedingly when the shout proved to be, 'Who had his

portrait taken?' 'Would I have my likeness painted?' It appeared that in a weak moment the youth in question, who was certainly a very good-looking fellow, but very young, had allowed a travelling artist to take his likeness, upon the promise of secresy on the part of the painter; the affair, however, got wind, and thus the fun which the villagers were making of the unfortunate hero."

By this time the day gradually wore on, and I asked Alûtedon whether it was not time to think of retiring "to dress for dinner?"

"Oh," replied he, "we will perform that act of grace here, so pray be under no apprehension, and enjoy yourself as you please till the time arrives for making our toilet."

I need scarcely say the novelty of everything around me so engrossed my attention that the hours flew on as minutes, and would that I could impart even a notion of the wonderful adaptation of every object to their several purposes, whether as articles of decoration or use. In all matters of mere

utility, beauty of form grew out of the exigencies of the case, and were never forced to reside in an outward expression without an harmonious soul or spirit within. Isolated forms of loveliness may captivate the attention, but unless in unison with surrounding subjects, beauty itself becomes a dissonance.

Every step I took awakened fresh feelings of admiration, not by startling efforts, but by that quiet imposing propriety of display which sinks in the mind, and imbues it with a calm, contented feeling of enjoyment without sudden calls upon its power of appreciation.

Alûtedon never seemed tired of answering all my questions; and, indeed, the simple curiosity I expressed amused him extremely. He took a great delight in provoking little surprises, and mixed with the amiability of his manner was a dash of delicate, but good-humoured irony, which, while it never offended, imparted a relish and piquancy to his conversation.

It was now time, he told me, to invest

myself in apparel suited to the illustrious company in which I was about to dine; and for this purpose we were conducted by a whole bevy of attendants to a robing-room. A delicious bath, composed of the rich treasures from the curious plant I before described, was the prelude to the act of adorning our persons; and having enveloped ourselves in garments whose fineness and beauty proved they had been woven in celestial looms, a strain of exquisite music came trembling through the air, and we were ushered once again into the presence of the Prince.

The chamber in which I now found myself was comparatively a small one, for Helionax had paid me the compliment to invite me to what we should term a family party; but on my way thither I had caught a sight of some of the grand banqueting-halls used upon state occasions, and I can only say that the fabled splendours of Babylonian interiors would have sunk into insignificance before the wondrous beauties of

these noble chambers. Nothing in Saracenic or Egyptian art, nothing in the Assyrian records or Athenian chronicles—not even the description of the palace in the "Cupid and Psyche," of Apuleius, would impart an idea of the luminous chambers of which I obtained a passing glimpse, since united to all the beauties of solid architecture were magical effects produced by light and the consequent uses of transparent materials.[1]

As before explained, the Prince had done me the honour to invite me to dinner almost *en famille*, but though our party was, in the literal sense of the word, no party at all, for the first time in my experience were met together the rare combinations of regal magnificence, social ease, affability, and female beauty; the latter of a kind so exquisite that the senses must have become intoxicated, but for the

M. Goguet disputes the claims of the ancients to architectural excellence; but a perusal of Vitruvius's description of an Egyptian banqueting-hall, would alone nullify his opinion. The reader curious in these matters would do well to turn to "De Architecturâ," and to "Origine des Lois, des Sciences, et des Arts, et de leur progrès chez les anciens peuples."

chastening presence of the highest order of intellect—unbending from the tension imposed on it by state affairs. When I considered the almost celestial splendour of all around me, the result not of remote ancestral achievements, but simply the necessary material accompaniment of that power of mind which had raised the Prince to the highest dignity of the state, I was more than ever reminded of the fact that from true greatness springs as much regard for the unbought graces of life, as for the sterner virtues, or, as Plato says, "the gods are as mindful of the minute as of the vast." The Prince himself received me in a manner I can only term affectionate, and at once introduced me to the Princess Heliotrope, his wife, and to her sister, the Princess Heliosweet.

In the same way that the Prince had been elected Sovereign of Heliopolis, by reason of his intellect surpassing that of all others, so the Princess had been selected by her husband, inasmuch as she excelled all her compeers in grace, loveliness, and accomplish-

ments. For myself, I was literally bewildered by her magical beauty. Around her brow played a halo of light, which increased in lustre as she conversed; and in moments of extreme animation its brightness was almost dazzling. The only description of mortal loveliness which at all came up to her surpassing charms is that of the Venus of Cnidos, described by Lucian and other writers, more especially for the swimming softness or moisture of the eyes (ὑγρον), so peculiar and so rare.[1]

The Princess Heliosweet bore a strong resemblance to her sister, and a "nimbus" of lustre played also around her tresses, but of a paler hue than that of the other lady's coronet of light. As the poet sings:

> "The youngest—but no tongue so warm,
> Though matchless eloquence be given,
> May dare portray her finished form
> The 'prodigality of Heaven.'

[1] The beauty of the Venus of Cnidos was so great that Nicomedes, King of Bythinia, offered to purchase it by remitting the whole public debt of the city; but the Cnidians rejected the offer, finding the statue was too important a source of revenue to them.

"O'er her warm cheeks vermilion dye,
Waves, lightly waves, her dark brown hair;
Bright as the winter star her eye,
Yet peaceful as the summer air."

Never did ravished vision gaze on two such forms, both lovelier far than the mother of Eros, even when, as Apuleius has it, "surrounded by all the choir of the Graces, attended by a multitude of Cupids, girt with her cestus redolent of cinnamon and bedewed with balsams." Our sociable cinquette was arrayed as follows: Helionax reclined[1] on a vermilion cloudlet, which had been arrested at a moment when its shape best fitted it for the purpose of a lounge, and when its texture was best adapted for such an use. To his right reposed, on a similar settee, but of a dove-colour, Heliotrope, his wife; her head, of "classic beauty," rested on her hand,

[1] The posture of the guests may possibly remind the reader of Plato's banquet and Zenophon's drinking-party; but there were exceptions to the general custom of reclining at meals, as explained in the "Deipnosophists" (Epith. b. i. Bohn's edition): "And his heroes sit at their banquets, and do not lie down." And Hegesander says it was not the custom in Macedonia for any one to lie down at a banquet, unless he had slain a boar which had escaped beyond the line of nets.

while with the other she pressed the aroma to her lips which, far less sweet than herself, sustained her with its delicious nourishment, and permeated her system with life-sustaining properties. To the left of the Prince was Heliosweet, his sister-in-law; next to whom it was my good fortune to repose; but *en passant*, I must confess my whole soul was absorbed by the wondrous glory of Heliotrope's charms, and more than once I found the conversation taking an undefined and confused tone, which startled me into the knowledge that all my faculties were lost in contemplating the angelic loveliness of one it was almost destruction to gaze upon. To the right of Heliotrope (and I envied the heavenly place) was Alûtedon, and thus our party consisted of only five persons placed on one side of a curved table,[1] covered with a cloth of the

[1] Oh, lame and impotent imagination—a table in the Sun! But perhaps so common a matter is named for the sake of explaining the absurd sums of money which the ancients gave for this article of furniture. Pliny relates that Cicero had paid for one 1,000,000 sesterces, or between 8000 and 9000

purest white, woven from the soft material found inside of the corolla of a species of delicate lily. Opposite, on the table, were arranged the various jars, flasks, flaçons, and vases,[1] containing the perfumes which formed our refection; and the attendants were youths and maidens selected for their beauty—the one dressed in dark vestures made of foreign night-skies, with fire-girdles

pounds sterling; and he mentions even more extraordinary instances.—See also Bekker (Gallus, p. 21, note).

[1] When speaking of the flasks for holding perfume, an allusion has been made (p. 81) to malleable glass, and since then I have met with a passage in the Trimalcio of Petronius too curious to omit:—"There was once, however, a workman who made a glass phial that did not break. So he was admitted to present it to Cæsar, and afterwards he took it back out of the emperor's hands and threw it on the ground. Cæsar was in the greatest possible alarm; but the other picked up the phial, and behold! it was dinted just like a bronze vessel. Then he took out a little hammer from his bosom, and easily and neatly repaired the phial. This being done, he thought he was already in Jove's heaven, particularly when the emperor said to him: 'Does anybody but yourself know how to make this kind of glass?—just think.' On his replying in the negative, Cæsar ordered him to be beheaded, because, in fact, if the secret had become known, we should think no more of gold than of dirt."

Dion Cassius and Pliny allude to this story, but express doubts as to its truth.

around their waists; while the others were decked in robes made from blue air, spangled with star-dust.

Course number one consisted of a perfume so extremely volatile, that before the vase containing it (one of which was placed for each guest) was opened it was necessary to bend the lips over, and the slightest imbibition imparted a delicious feeling, but too transient to satisfy the appetite. This odour was made from the breath of a sort of mignionette, or more correctly, it was made with the air which came in contact with its perfume. This was caught at the precise moment of contact, and great art was required in its production.

The second course consisted of a scent more substantial, which seemed to take off the keen edge of appetite. This also was served in most exquisite vases, and their covers being removed, the aroma was inhaled gently or rapidly, according to the person's hunger and his ideas of gentility.

Some greedy fellow would doubtless breathe it up all at once, but the Princesses finessed, and took little sips of inhalation, as though they had had a good lunch at one! This particular odour was formed by confining for a given number of hours another description of scent in the bells of a flower resembling our digitalis. When the scent was poured in, the petals were fastened at their tops, and if the perfume was retained too long in its captivity it was spoiled, and if not long enough it was useless, so that great skill was necessary in its preparation.

The third course consisted of one large urn placed in the middle of the table, from which sprang in different directions pretty flexible tubes of some length, each furnished with a mouthpiece, and from this general "dish," or *pièce de resistance*, a most dainty but nourishing perfume was imbibed; and many a little laugh and small flutter were occasioned by a transfer of the mouthpieces from one to the other. Perceiving this interchange was as complimentary as

taking a glass of wine with your neighbour at table, I handed my tube to Heliosweet, who presented me with hers in return in a most bewitching style; and at this juncture every one settled down into extreme sociability, and the conversation soon bloomed into flower and fruit. Still I could have wished that the beautiful little mouthpiece fresh from the dewy lips of Heliosweet had been blessed with the touch of her sister's rosy mouth, and I thought to myself, "Miserable earthite that I am, here is a shadow already falling athwart my happiness—falling by reason of the very excess of my bliss."

This last odour was distilled from several kinds of flowers at the period of the morning when honey-dew almost drowned their petals with its luscious moisture. In fact, it was a sort of pot-pourri, or olla podrida, or galimafrée, or hodge-podge, of scents, from which every one present helped themselves, imbibing its sweets by that simple and homely act which our own golden bee performs in the centre of terrene flowers. A cessation of appetite

now began to be manifest in us all, and little delicacies, or entrées, were served up of the most exquisite and recherché description. One of these consisted of a collection of curious-looking little buds, about the size of a crocus before it is expanded. Upon squeezing these against the lips a most delicious fragrance bewitched the palate, but they required to be partaken of with great discretion, for the smallest portion of the bud itself being imbibed with the scent caused a little cough; and from this fact may be conceived the extreme delicacy of the organisation of these pure beings.

Other odours were encased in small bulbs, which, when punctured, exhaled a scent that excited the powers of the imagination in a very remarkable manner, and wit and fun sparkled in the conversation like rainbows in the spray of the waterfall. Other perfumes again, consisted of long reed-like looking productions, concerning which the ladies coquetted not a little, declaring "they had dined so well they could not touch one—no,

not one;" but being slightly stimulating in their nature, the gentle creatures gave way, and were gradually persuaded to imbibe just a *soupçon*, and in a few minutes their cheeks became heightened in colour, and their bright eyes grew a degree more bright. The lustrous coronets around their brows increased, too, in brilliancy, and laughed with joy amid their luxuriant tresses.

I really never beheld, nor could have conceived, any loveliness at all comparable to the beauty of the Princesses; and whether it was the effect of their bewitching grace, or the result of the invigorating nature of the last *plat*, I know not, but I found myself talking at a great rate, and evidently amusing the company with my description of Earth and its manners and customs — a sort of after-dinner memoranda of men and things.

It would be useless to go through the whole category of odours of which our banquet consisted; and it is, perhaps, sufficient to say that in variety and excellence it would have rivalled the best possible dinner

at Philippe's in Paris, or at the Hôtel de Flandres at Brussels; but I must not omit to allude to one very curious odour held in great estimation by the fair sex, which effervesced and sparkled on the palate like a bottle of Cliquôt; nor must I omit to state that many of the scents had the flavour of delicious fruits, which, following the more substantial portion of the dinner, might possibly be compared to a dessert such as Vertumnus himself would have conjured with his wand. With this, certain scents, in exquisite bottles composed of single diamonds cut in every possible device, were placed upon the table; and strains of exquisite music proceeded from unseen sources. At the same moment there arose upward through the ground an exhalation of sweetness, which seemed to enfold us in the aërial arms of some divine spirit; and this, the grand chorus of the band of perfumes, was the sequel to the feast. The conversation now became animated in the extreme, and it was my good fortune to alternately

amuse and astonish our little party, either by my naïve expression of wonder, or by my description of mundane affairs. I was especially delighted to find that I had made myself agreeable in the estimation of the ladies; and I have no doubt, like a vain and foolish fellow, I should have fallen desperately in love with Heliosweet had it not been that my imagination was held spell-bound by the surpassing loveliness of Heliotrope. The world-famed beauty of Hypathia, Laïs, Helen, or Aspasia, would have paled in her presence, as the torch of Vesper is dimmed when Selênê appears. The glance of pure affection with which she ever and anon regarded her husband, was a picture of perfect tenderness, and yet withal so exalted in its character, and so ennobling in its expression, that it was impossible not to perceive that the devoted woman was an intellectual being of the purest form of the Creator's image. One moment her angelic smile would inspire thoughts of refined love too perfect for an earthite's ima-

gination, and at the next that peculiar look emanating from the ideal world would startle the beholder with a feeling of awe; and then again would dwell on her features an aspect of innate dignity, which stamped her as much queen of women as sovereign lady of Heliopolis. Can it be wondered at, therefore, that my whole soul was absorbed in admiration of the ever-varying expressions which flitted over her celestial features?

Whether it was the reflexion of her charms on her sister, I know not, but I fancied Heliosweet's beauty had increased during our repast, and, as I before said, she resembled her sister, but only as the briar rose resembles "sweet gul in her bloom."

The Prince's questions related, as may naturally be supposed, to the political government of the planet Earth; while the curiosity of the Princess, his wife, was principally directed to social matters; but the inquiries of Heliosweet referred to subjects connected with her own sex, and her merri-

ment was excessive when I described the customs, habits, and fashions of the dear female denizens of this hemisphere.

There are few evidences of our ignorance more convincing than the effect produced by the simple questions of those who are perfectly unacquainted with the subject-matter of their interrogations, and I found myself sorely puzzled upon several points requiring elucidation respecting matters that pass around us every day of our lives. I had fortunately, however, dipped pretty freely into ancient and modern authors, so that I was enabled to impart to my delighted auditory some general idea of the history of the Earth, as far as our own limited acquaintance extends.

I gave the best sketch I was able of the religious, political, and social history of mankind down to the present period; and the Prince's questions concerning the exquisite doctrines of the Christian faith proved how thoroughly he appreciated the moral beauty of its tenets. His curiosity as to

why people neglected to act up to the glorious precepts inculcated by the loving intellect of the great Founder of our belief, was very difficult to satisfy; and upon this point the confusion of his ideas in some measure was owing to my own incapacity to cast a satisfactory light upon the subject.

Amongst other matters, the Prince was asking me for information respecting our criminal laws, and when I informed him that men and women perpetrated such crimes as required their very lives in requital, and that, moreover, our mode of sacrificing them to the demands of Nemesis was by hanging them by the neck, poor Heliosweet turned dreadfully pale, and the lustre around the glorious brow of the Princess, her sister, became dimmed in brightness. Moreover, when I explained that a sovereign lady, the Queen of my country, was compelled by the nature of our laws to sign the document which consigned the criminal to his pendulum of agony, the ladies could no longer restrain their feelings, and tears of com-

miseration filled their beautiful eyes. The feeling, too, was by no means diminished when I explained the anguish which this stern necessity occasioned the tender-hearted and noble-minded woman who fills the throne in the land of my birth, and I was extremely glad when a curious surmise of Helionax's changed the current of our thoughts.

"Heliophilus," he said, "you just now explained that some of the less criminal acts of your people are punished by pecuniary fine."

"Yes," I answered, "such is the case."

"You also," he continued, "told me that the value of money fluctuated, and that quotations of its value differed at different times."

"Yes," quoth I, "even so."

"Well," said he, "then there seems to me a great injustice in inflicting a pecuniary fine on your criminals, because that which is a crime to-day; and worth the loss of five pounds to the perpetrator, may to-morrow (although exactly the same outrage) be worth only four pounds nineteen shillings and

a fraction! You make, in fact, a fluctuating punishment for a fixed crime."

I smiled at this view of the case, as also, no doubt, would our magistrates and lawyers; and I explained, as well as I could, how small would be the difference.

Going from the grave to the gay, the ladies laughed immoderately when I made them comprehend that our women wear certain additions to their dress, which shall be nameless; and when I explained the previous fashion of hoops, I fear they thought I was a sort of Bruce, imposing on their credulity. However, they *did* laugh, and thereby heightened their magical beauty, for the illumination of a happy spirit upon a lovely woman's features is by no means to be despised, more especially as, in this case, it served to show off those delicate and even lines of pearl which they possessed in lieu of incisors and molars, as before explained.

If our conversation could have been followed by material means, and a line drawn from one subject to another according to the

eccentricity of its divergence, such a figure would suggest, geometry in state of excessive intoxication!

From ladies' paraphernalia the conversation suddenly verged to the southern point of the compass, and stood for some time pointing to poetry. The Princesses were extremely interested in the description I gave of our modern love-poets, and I recited little bits of Byron and Moore, which charmed them exceedingly. Indeed, I observed that Hiliosweet regarded me with an expression of interest highly flattering to my self-love, but then it was evoked by the spirits of our bards; so, remembering this, I was not unduly elated by the glance of regard. Besides which, all my thoughts reverted to Heliotrope, and again a shadow passed over me, when I felt that her beauty was exercising an undue influence on my imagination.

"And is your lyric poet, he whom you call, in your stage language, Tommy Moore, dead?" inquired Helionax.

"Yes, indeed," I answered, "he is gone; and he who made melody of language, and swept with music's own wings the tenderest sentiments over the spirit of man, is gone, and the cypress sighs over him, the night air echoes the plaint, and the cups of little flowers sing with tiny notes of saddest song over the grave where they buried him."

"Ah," said Heliotrope, "how your maidens must sigh for the departed. How many bruised spirits must have followed him to the last bourne."

"Ay," said I, bitterly, "his publisher and a friend or two followed the bard to his resting-place; and the spirit which, when in its living setting, wafted household and familiar melodies into the hearts of old and young, was snatched from the popular love which would have embalmed it, galvanised, as it were, into distorted life, and rudely made to assume an aspect of mean impulses and ignoble features."

"How mean you?" said Helionax, surprised by my earnest manner.

"I mean, dear Prince," I continued, "that the noblest and best of us in our planet have the bright and the dark side of character, and that, in this case, a biographer was found ready and able to lay bare to the world the dross which had mixed with the poet's golden hours."

"But was it not well and wise to speak the truth?"

"Ah, Prince," I exclaimed, "supposing some beautiful bird with golden plumage and glorious song were all the livelong day to gladden your palace with his love-notes—love-notes so mellifluous, so melting, that echo ravished, bore them away for response in regions afar off,[1] would you, when the songster passed away to the dark shades, dissect his body, and on the shrine dedicated to the Parnassides lay the reeking and unsightly entrails?

"But, as if the evil done to the memory of the man were not enough, the reason as-

[1] "Lalla Rookh" was sung in the streets of Ispahan.

signed for publishing his memoirs turned the injury into a bitter sarcasm against the ordinances of his country, for they went forth to the public, BECAUSE funds were wanting to support the wife of the departed bard. Her future pittance was to flow, not from the coffers of a grateful country, but from the recital of her husband's weakness, folly, or vice."[1]

"Was there any animus in the matter?" said Helionax.

"By no means," I replied. "'The Life and Correspondence' were supervised by a minister of the Crown, who enjoys the highest opinion of the people, and who is ever foremost in the ranks when the country requires the aid of his abilities, or the example of his manly spirit; but who, in his desire to benefit the living, injured, as I venture to conceive, the memory of the dead. I maintain the principle, dear Prince, that

[1] It is stated that the poet himself left his memoirs to be published as they stood; but surely, in such a case, disobedience to his wishes would have been a virtue.

those who have laboured to press the most exquisite wines from the vineyards of thought and imagination, have purchased an immunity from a revival of their mortal errors. 'Requiescat in pace,' should be the motto of the public; but how often the words of Marc Antony are verified:

> 'The evil, that men do, lives after them;
> The good, is oft interred with their bones.'"

"Pardon me for diverting the train of your reflections," said the Prince; "but how curious it is that you should be obliged to bury your dead."

I thought of our Boards of Health and our Sanitary Commissions, as I replied:

"Indeed, Prince, your remark is just, and we are only now arriving at the conclusion that it is better to deposit the remains of those for whom we mourn, in gardens, where flowers, and shrubs, and trees combine morally and chemically to benefit the living, than in the heart of crowded cities. But how, may I ask, do you dispose of your dead in this sphere?"

"Oh," answered he, smiling, "we have no occasion to bury the departed, for at the moment of dissolution the body almost entirely evaporates, and the residue is simply a little sweet-smelling powder, which is preserved as a dear memento by the living."

The conversation now flowed into fresh channels; and amongst other matters, the ladies were very anxious to know how the Sun looked when gazed at from the Earth, and what sort of accounts our astronomers rendered of him.

Upon this, I took occasion to discourse in a very lively and learned manner; indulging more especially in the latter, as I was under no fear of contradiction, and this feeling of certain immunity from criticism always permits a vast display of research.

I therefore not only explained how the Sun appeared at different periods and at different seasons, but I amused the Princesses extremely by describing the many strange surmises of the ancients and moderns

respecting the great luminary. How the schools of Democritus and Epicurus conceived the Sun a sort of laboratory fed by the pabulum of ether, which by a kind of secretory process is converted into light. How one named Chalcidius conceived the head-quarters of the soul to be established in the Sun. How a celebrated Latin author called Lucretius termed it a wheel. How one, Anaximander, and another, Anaximenes, declared the Sun to be a circle of fire extending round the heavens, and that he shines through a hole like the embrasure of a flute, and that eclipses are produced by stopping it! How Anaxagoras

> "Held that the Sun was but a piece
> Of red-hot iron as big as Greece."

How, as a Mr. Eton, in his "Survey of the Turkish Empire," tells us, the Turks believed (and possibly may do so to this day) the Sun to be a vast body of culinary fire, about as large as the Ottoman provinces; and that eclipses of the moon are occa-

sioned by a great dragon attempting to devour that luminary—(thereat the company all laughed). How a wonderful Greek writer, called Homer ("We know him!" exclaimed the Prince), whose very existence is disputed by the German critics, wrote of the Sun as being fastened to the earth by a golden chain; meaning it, however, as Plato imagines, as a metaphor expression of its rays. How it was attempted to prove a certain Dr. Elliott insane during his trial for murder (according to our mundane annals, in 1787) because he declared his belief that the Sun might be inhabited. And lastly, how a modern professor wrote a book to prove that the Earth alone of all the universe is inhabited.

"Upon my word," said Helionax, "your terrestrial philosophers have made some shrewd guesses respecting our physical nature, and may I ask what sort of an idea you individually formed of our globe before you arrived here?"

"Why," said I, laughing, "having a very morbid imagination, sometimes I fancied it a watch with its gold back towards the earth—a chronometer, in fact, by which the motions of the spheres are directed. At other times I imagined it the enormous yolk of an egg, shining by the light of a fire which was cooking it!"[1]

At this conceit the Prince did me the honour to smile, and whether I was confused by the number of perfumes I had exhaled I know not, but more than once I addressed the Princess Heliosweet, mistaking her for her sister, and being a little elated with the praises I received for my memory and erudition, I continued to impart my knowledge in a very patronising and self-satisfied manner.

"I must tell you, dear Prince," I continued, "that this glorious orb of yours has been the theme of many a poet's song,

[1] But what the fuel? for it has been calculated that in the space of 385,130,000 Egyptian years (of 360 days), the Sun would lose only the $\frac{1}{1111}$ of his bulk from the continued afflux of his light.

and of many a grand and sublime apostrophe." I then proceeded to draw rather largely from "Lalla Rookh;" repeated Manfred's "Address to the Sun;" quoted the beautiful passage in Thomson's "Seasons" describing the various gems as receiving the gift of colour from the Sun; and then, desirous of making a little show of Eastern lore, I repeated a sonnet or so from Hafiz, the Anacreon of Schiraz; from Sardi's "Gulistun, or Garden of Roses;" from Tarasa, the Arabian poet; not omitting a passage or two from some of poor Reiski's Arabic translations, especially the verse extracted by Dr. Good in his "Lucretius."[1] As a compliment to the Prince, too, I recited a verse from the Percy collection, containing a

[1] "Lo! at thy bidding Spring appears,
Thy slave ambitious to be seen;
Lord of the world, Thy voice she hears,
And robes th' exulting earth in green:
And from her mantle's radiant hems
Drops pearls, drops emeralds as she winds;
The milk-maid crops the heavenly gems,
And round her tuckt-up kirtle binds."

The Abi'lola.

line very depreciatory to the lesser luminaries of the sky.[1]

Then, after the ringing of these and similar small bells, I finished by repeating extracts from Milton, which came after the others like the peal of an organ succeeding to the notes of musical glasses.

I had reason to believe my recitations gave considerable satisfaction, not so much from any merit in selection, as from the quotations all subscribing their praises to the great luminary. Before I quite ended the topic, I thought it only right to revert to the fact that the mythology of the whole pagan world has been resolved into three grand systems of idolatry (of course I avoided the use of this word), each of early date, and continuing in every variety: the Arkite, or worship of the Ark; the Ophite, or worship of the Serpent; and the worship of

[1] "You meaner beauties of the night,
Which poorly satisfy our eyes,
More by your number than your light,
Like common people of the skies,
What are ye when the Sun doth rise?"

the Sun.[1] Next, I imparted an idea of what Strabo and Pliny wrote of the Soani, or worshippers of the Sun,—especially referring to the Parsees or Ghebers, who supposed the throne of the Almighty to be situated in the orb of light.

"Are your astronomers aware," inquired the Prince, "that the globe on which we are now conversing moves round a distant centre in an orbit of inconceivable dimensions?"

"Yes," I rejoined, "we have arrived at that conclusion, and we are looking forward to the period when some newly-discovered power in our telescopes may enable us to perceive, or at least to gain a glimpse of, this vast invisible body; and I confess I am disappointed that it is not apparent to the inhabitants here."

[1] It is very curious to trace the derivation of some of our commonest proper names to the source from whence Mr. Bryant and other learned writers have followed them. The word Europa, by this analysis, is from Eur-Op-er, Eur-Oph, "the Serpent of the Sun." Jupiter Ammon, or Hammon, is a deified personation of Ham, the father of Chus, adorned under the title of the Sun: for Ham-On is strikingly a title of the Sun. It is stated by some critics, and particularly by Prætextatus upon Macrobius (Saturnal. i. 18), that Bacchus was the Sun; and Plutarch expressly tells us that Osiris,

"Its distance is so enormous," replied Helionax, "that even our optic glasses, which doubtless exceed yours in power, only render it as a twinkling star in the heavens:[1] from analogy, this body is imagined to be a sun with attendant planets, and it might be supposed capable of lighting our world; but so far is it removed, that, though its vastness rules our system, we are obliged to have an intrinsic light, as you already know."

The hours were now stealing on, and the Prince and Princesses arising at this moment, an aërial concert burst forth from some distant chambers. At the same instant the walls on all sides receded, the roof grew higher, and down at my feet, shining through the transparent sapphire-like floor, a second

Bacchus, Serapis, and Sol signified the same deity. See also page 121 of this book.

[1] The *invisible* body, round which the Sun, with the solar system, is supposed to move, *could not be seen from* the Sun by telescopic aid. But *if* the hypothesis be adopted of Professor Müller, that *Alcyone*, the brightest star of the Pleiades, is the centre of the orbit in which the Sun and planets revolve, then the opinion may be ventured upon that it is visible by the aid of the telescope.

heaven burst into blaze, lit with innumerable stars, so arranged as to present a perfect reflex of the sky at night; and owing, I suppose, to some reflective[1] power of the atmosphere beneath, they appeared to be twinkling and dancing[2] with delight. The chamber thus magically enlarged and strangely illumined, led into an enormous hall or assembly-room, formed of the purest white minica,—roof, floor, and walls. It was so carved and cut that brilliant artificial light on the exterior fell on the different

[1] "Were it not for the reflective and scattering power of the atmosphere, no object would be visible to us out of direct sunshine; every shadow of a passing cloud would be pitchy darkness; the stars would be visible all day, and every apartment into which the Sun had not direct admission, would be involved in nocturnal obscurity."—Sir J. Herschel.

[2] The following curious paragraph is from Burton's "Anatomy:"—"The Sun and Moon (some say) dance about the Earth, the three upper planets about the Sun as their centre, now stationary, now direct, now retrograde, now in apogee, then in perigee, now swift, then slow, occidental, oriental, they turn round, jump, and trace ♀ and ☿ about the Sun with those thirty-three Maculæ or Bourbonian planet, *circa Solem saltantes Cytharedum*, saith Fromundus. Four Medicean stars dance about Jupiter, two Austrian about Saturn, &c., and all (belike) to the music of the spheres." Verily this was a dance not seen every day of the year!

facets of the sparkling material, imbuing them with prismatic colours, but the seemingly irregular surfaces were so arranged that *they* only received the tints, while medallions of the spotless substance remained in tranquil contrast.

As soon as the Prince and ourselves became manifest to the assembly, the company, a few at a time, advanced, and ascending the dais where we had feasted,[1] without confusion or pressure, paid their respects to their Sovereign.

The music here changed the nature of its rhythm, and ladies and gentlemen formed into figures and prepared for a dance! Yes, even in the Sun the sympathy between motion and music was a pastime and a grace. It must be remembered, too, that here geometry articulate was music, and geometry in motion was the dance. Every movement was in accord with the strain, and every

[1] "What!" exclaims some cynic, "did the Prince receive his guests on the spot where he had dined?" but remember, O Zoilus! the banquet was composed of delicate perfumes distilled from the daintiest flowers of the Sun.

fresh burst of melody in accordance with the eternal laws of proportion and repetition.[1] The figures, to the preconceived ideas of an Earthite on the subject, would appear strange indeed, but to me, with a new comprehension of things suited to the state of my being, they were overpowering in their effects upon the mind and senses. As the music from unseen sources burst forth in delicious harmony, groups composed of two, four, and six couples advanced from the throng into the centre of the hall, and scarcely moving from one spot, they moved their supple limbs in every conceivable form of grace, now suggestive of tenderness, now mirth, now devotion, and indeed of every sentiment connected with intellectuality and the most chaste refinement.[2] It was quite impossible

[1] Some half century ago one Thoinot Arbeau, a dancing-master of Paris, gave an "orchesography," wherein all the steps and motions of a dance were written or noted down, as the sounds of a song are scored in music.

[2] An excellent description of the various dances amongst the ancients will be found in Yonge's "Athenæus" (b. xiv. p. 1004 to 1008). Amongst the Ionians was a figure called the Scops, intending to represent people looking out from a dis-

to mistake the thesis suggested by the exquisite evolutions they performed, for they were so eloquent, so chastened, and so perfectly in accordance with the sentiment of the accompanying strains, that each person might have been supposed to represent the spirit of melody moving to the impulses and harmonies of his own soul.

It is utterly impossible to convey an idea of the tableaux, the peculiarity of which was increased by the dresses of the dancers changing their colours according to the movement and sentiment of the dance. To a quick measure the graceful robes glowed in brightest hues, then as the cadences died, and the motions of the dancers became slow, the tints of waving cloud-mantles faded into the most delicate dyes, but again glowed

tance, making an arch over their brows with their hand so as to shade their eyes. It is somewhere mentioned by Æschylus,

"And all these old *σκωπεύματα* of yours."

How curious if the modern and vulgar custom of placing the finger on the nose originates from the Ionic figure!

in different degrees as the concord again swelled into energy and force.

On sped the hours, and time, while entrancing with delight, for once left no stain upon memory; innocence had presided at the festival, and the hours unsullied flew to their home in the eternal past.

On sped the hours, and between the dances music succeeded, while the concluding concert was played in the gardens of the palace by arborescent performers! Trees of a peculiar construction, planted according to their several powers of tone, gave forth, as the night-breeze swept through their chord-like branches and tendrils, fitful Æolian melodies; to which, musical tubes and the pipes of shrubs adjacent, responded in a beautiful antiphony.

On sped the hours, and a burst of odours spreading itself throughout all the palace, announced a repast of fragrance for those not too ravished by the delights of the evening to partake of a fresh feast; but for myself, I was so overcome with all I had

seen, and with all the thousand new sensations which had played on my faculties, that I asked Alûtedon to escape from the magic scene and return with me before I became too intoxicated with pleasure. I fear my kind friend must have pronounced me a most uninteresting companion, for I had scarcely opened my lips, except to wish him "sweet repose" as he left me at my door.[1]

In vain I attempted to make memory my slave; in vain I bade her bring me other forms of beauty to chase the all-absorbing one from my too sensitive soul, but the endeavour was unavailing; and though a glorious hymn gently pealed forth as I cast myself on my fragrant couch, even that had no effect, and my dreams were still of Heliotrope; and on the morrow my waking thoughts reconstructed the undefined form of her beauty, which had formed a bright heaven of my night.

[1] Considering what we before hinted, this was wise!

CHAPTER V.

THE FAUNA AND FLORA.

THE WASHING-PLANT—THE MIRROR-SHRUB—THE BIRD-BATHER—MUSICAL REEDS—DANCING FISH—SWIMMING ARCHERS—LUMINOUS PLANTS—FLOWER-LAMP—ATTEMPT TO DRIVE—VEGETABLE BALISTA — HERBACEOUS SHRUB—THE HARP-TREE—ROYAL CARRIAGES—THE HOOP-BEAST—LIVING LOCOMOTIVE—SKY SPIDER—BALLOON ANIMALS—THE HARP-PLAYER — FLUTE-TAIL—NOSE-TRUMPETER—FAN-TAILS — INVISIBLE FISH — TRAP-BEASTS — THE ARTIST'S FRIEND — SHAKSPEARE—DANGEROUS GLANCES—HOME.

THE sweet air of a new day came with its fluttering appeal to bid me arise and be stirring; and having performed my toilet, and refreshed myself with the delicious flower-bath, I again strolled forth into the garden, never tired of investigating the floral wonders around me. The whole tribe of utility plants were most wonderful, and it was not long before I discovered a new one. It consisted of a large corolla of white leaves, resembling

a basin in form, and quite as useful as that confidential article of use. From its pistil a little fountain of sweet water arose and played into the air, which kept the reservoir always supplied, and a little to spare to water its leaves, stems, and root. Upon examination, I perceived that it bore a fruit resembling a common orange, but in composition precisely like almond soap. Its broad soft leaves were exactly similar to the finest linen, at the stems of which were little irregular clumps of soft bristle, so that people could wash themselves in a floral basin, use flower soap for lubrication, polish their nails with a natural brush, and dry their faces and hands on leafy towels.

Adjacent to this useful and strange production were usually planted the mirror-shrub, which, by a curious arrangement of highly-polished leaves, served as looking-glasses. At this moment I was highly diverted by observing a bird of beautiful plumage alight on the edge of the basin, and after chirping and looking about him

with a very bright and happy expression of face, he popped into the water, and dabbled and dipped to his heart's content; at length out he comes of the sweet *douche*, and flying against the fruit, soaps his plumage till it presents a very sorry appearance, then he bathes himself again in the clear liquid; this done, he flutters about, poising himself over the reflecting leaves of the adjacent mirror-plant, seemingly quite content with his personal appearance. Having, moreover, shaken off the lingering moisture, which for awhile had dimmed the brilliant colour of his feathers, away he flew to his lady-love on a neighbouring tree, and trilled forth a song full of rich and tremulous beauty.[1]

[1] This may again smack strongly of the marvellous, but at least it is not more so than the wondrous tales told both by Pliny and Aristotle of birds, beasts, and fishes; nor does it very far exceed the strange habits of many of the birds belonging to the ornithology of the New World.

Some of the tribe of Carabidæ are very curious, being enabled, as a means of defence, to exhale a very fœtid and acrid odour, which they discharge from the abdomen to a considerable distance. In the Brachinus this fluid explodes, hence the term Bombardier beetles. Some other species again

While extremely amused by watching this happy little creature, full of love and music, my attention was drawn to two miniature lakes, communicating with each other by a small sparkling cascade. Just below this tiny waterfall grew curious reeds, which had arranged themselves parallel with the surface of the water; and being of different lengths, and of a metallic yet flexible nature, they continually responded to the falling stream, by uttering a wild low melody, now increasing, now diminishing, according to the force of the cascade, which gave starts and sudden energies, as we all know a waterfall is in the habit of doing,—the love-whispers of the breeze being no doubt the cause thereof. At all events, the effect was very beautiful, and I need scarcely observe, very un*earthly*, excepting we suppose that some Undine was playing a ritornello for the express pleasure of water-lilies and sedge blossoms.

(sub-genus Anobium) counterfeit sleep or death with such tenacity that it is said they will allow themselves to be burnt alive rather than give sign of animation.

A portion of this miniature lake was, at the bottom, free from the usual covering of Elytron; and as the light streamed up from the illuminated depths below, the water had the appearance of being an illuminated atmosphere, and the gambols of many members of the finny tribe might be compared to birds disporting in the air. I was especially delighted with watching a shoal of purple and gold fish, which swam about in the most promiscuous manner; but as they approached the musical reeds they formed themselves into battalions, and went through an exhibition which seemed to me something between a drill and a dance.[1] Others came to the surface, and brought down the gay summer flies that were sporting in the sunshine, by propelling from their mouth little pearl-seeds, which they found at the bottom of the stream.[2] They scarcely ever missed

[1] The Demoiselle, or Numidian crane (family Grnidæ), is a source of wonder and delight to the inhabitants of many of the tropical latitudes, which in its solitude goes through a number of graceful evolutions, as if it were moving to the melody of some strain inarticulate to human hearing.

[2] The "Chætodon rostratus," a fish of the Indian seas, o

their aim; and I drew a moral from the fact, that many of their brethren lived entirely by watching the moment when the archer had brought down his victim, to swim up and take possession of it, while he who had exhibited all the skill went without his dinner.

How long I might have continued observing these piscatory sportsmen I am not prepared to say, for at that moment I noticed a grotto by the side of the water, covered externally with creeping plants, and evidently extending some way into the bank, which rose rather abruptly from the edge of the lake. Into this natural cavern curiosity led me, and my astonishment may be imagined when I discovered that the whole place was illuminated by luminous flowers of every shape and every dye. Bluebells, with light inside shining through their delicate azure, grew in great luxuriance, as also a sort of digitalis, whose flowers were so lit by an

tains its insect prey by shooting it with drops of water from its long snout.

interior lustre that they appeared like painted lanterns made by fairies for their own use. There were strange pendulum plants, too, falling from the roofs, with specks of lustre at the extremities of their lobes, and as they swayed to and fro they described small arcs of brilliancy. Then again other plants hung down from the top with tazza-like flowers, in the centre of which were little wicks, supported in combustion by an oil secreted in their own tendrils. Nothing could exceed the beauty of these floral lamps, delicate in texture, exquisite in plan, and giving forth a lustre tender as a Sicilian love-tone.[1] It was by these natural lights that the bees of the Sun read their lessons of skill—read them from works on the subject written on the flower's leaves by Nature's hand, but all incomprehensible (as indeed are most of Nature's best secrets) to mortal comprehension, and invisible to mortal sight.

[1] A line from Mrs. Tighe's exquisite poem of "Psyche" might be here appropriate:

"While alabaster lamps a *milky light* disclose."

Then again there were other flowers which rose like stalagmites from the ground, crowned with undefined circles of light, as though some enamoured fire-fly performed an orbit around its centre of sweetness. There were likewise creeping plants, with luminous berries—red, green, and blue; but perhaps the most beautiful of all was an enormous lily growing near the ground, the light which illuminated it being underneath its leaves instead of inside them, as in the other species, so that all the delicate tracery of its pure and white texture became visible, while a centre of semi-opaque gold glowed as a piece of liquid amber.

In this magical grotto I could have spent the entire day, but sundry voices in the gardens told me I was sought for, and on emerging from the enchanting cavern I found a number of ladies and gentlemen, who, being my near neighbours, had done me the honour to pay me a complimentary visit, not only to welcome me to Helios, but to invite me to their houses; and I promised most

faithfully to avail myself of their proffered hospitality. Be it especially remarked that these friendly people were not aware I had been a guest at the palace the previous day! Courtesies and graces being exchanged, my visitors departed, and at the same moment Alûtedon drove up in a very elegant "turn out." It consisted of a sort of small, shell-shaped car, somewhat resembling the conveyance which we see in the pictures of Galatea drawn by dolphins, or, to be more classically correct, by pompili.

"Well, Heliophilus," exclaimed my friend, "I see your neighbours have been doing the civil, but we will chat as we proceed, for I have called to desire you to see some of our lions, and you must dine with me on your return."

"I shall be delighted," I replied, stepping into the carriage; "but is there any chance of seeing the Prince again to-day."

"You may see him whenever you please; and," he added, with rather a knowing look, "you may possibly get a glimpse of the

Princess Heliosweet, who is going with her sister to amuse the royal children, by witnessing a display of animal instinct at our zoological gardens. Is she not beautiful?"

"Very," I answered, somewhat curtly; "but—but—I think the Princess Heliotrope far the lovelier of the two."

"Of course," he replied; "for as I before explained, love in this planet has the effect of increasing personal beauty to almost an unlimited extent."

"Ah!" thought I to myself, "if all the married ladies of Europe were beautiful because they adored their lords——" But I suppressed the concluding part of the reflection, and demanded if Heliosweet would become as lovely as the Princess her sister, if she were wedded?

"Yes," said Alûtedon, "supposing she loved her spouse with the same intense affection; but love differs in degree, and it would be impossible for any being to so idolise her husband as our sovereign lady worships the Prince."

Whether a guilty conscience was the cause I know not, but I fancied Alûtedon said this with marked emphasis—but perhaps it was only my imagination, and I changed the conversation by asking him whether I had sufficient intuitive skill to drive our pretty carriage, which was going along at a capital pace. He replied by relinquishing me his seat, and thereupon I wished it to go straight forward, and straight forward it went. Then I ceased to wish anything, and it stopped! Then I wished it to turn to the right, and to the right it turned. Then in like manner to the left. Then I willed it to turn backward, and backward it went; and upon my trying a double wish at the same time, it turned round and round, for the two opposing forces acted as the oars of a boat act when the stroke of each is contrary. Alûtedon laughed heartily at my surprise, but although it required but a very slight mental effort to propel it, yet I soon discovered that to drive skilfully absorbed all the attention, for the moment I began to think of other matters the

vehicle went wrong, while a reverie would bring it to a most unequivocal full stop.

"Ah!" said Alûtedon, "I perceive you would be some time before you acquired the knack of entertaining two sets of ideas—one of the first essentials in becoming a Solar Jehu. But what are your conveyances like in your world?"

I would rather this question had not been asked, and with a feeling of extreme humiliation I explained matters connected with our public conveyances.

"But," asked he, "why not arrange your streets as ours are arranged—walk above and drive below?"

"Our sewers are below," I answered, "and all beneath us is necessarily in darkness."

"Your sewers—what are they?"

"Why pipes, and ducts, and channels, and valves, and gratings, and traps."

"Very explanatory," said he.

"Well, then, by their means," I answered, "we drain our cities of their impurities."

"Impurities—how mean you?"

Here our carriage gave a tremendous lurch, owing to my forgetfulness, and Alûtedon, receiving no reply, imagined something was wrong, so he again reverted to the former subject, and exclaimed—"But respecting your public vehicles: you say they are drawn by horses; what pets you must make of them, and how careful not to overwork them, for I suppose they feel pain as the people do?"

Another sudden divergence of our carriage from its direct course was the result of *this* question, and pretending not to have heard it, I plunged into a description of how our long journeys were performed by steam, and discoursed—no doubt far more fluently than soundly—upon scientific matters in general.

We had now approached by a circuitous route the environs of the city, and being somewhat fatigued with the novel exercise of driving by force of mental persistence, I relinquished the seat of honour to my friend, which was the more fortunate, for at the

same moment we entered one of the underground passages, which was similar to entering an arcade of glass—ever remembering the source of light was below.

On we went through these beautiful carriage drives, completely under the heart of the city, and soon emerged at the opposite extremity into a road leading to other suburbs. Before long we arrived at a spot overshadowed with trees, and I was lost in amazement at their variety and strange forms. The leaves of some were twisting in the breeze like our aspens, but being composed of a bright metallic substance, they cast as they turned reflexions on adjacent objects like those motes of light which dance on our walls when some bright material is set in motion in the sunshine. Then there were other trees, dark and green, looking like duennas guarding volatile and exquisitely beautiful companions. There were also trees making a helix from the base upwards, and at certain seasons their spiral springs would become depressed towards the ground, form-

ing savine-looking shrubs, when all of a sudden they sprung into beautiful forest trees, their apices almost piercing the clouds. Thus, when crouching as shrubs it was dangerous to approach them in case of their sudden rising, and the birds took especial care never to build in their branches, for had they done so, their eggs or their small families would have been shot up like stones out of some of Archimedes' infernal machines at the siege of Syracuse! This curious horticultural phenomenon arose from the trees requiring constant attention from the breezes, and during a continuance of calm weather, by falling downward and then suddenly shooting up, a current of air passed through their branches and leaves, and they obtained by their own exertions all they desired. I observed that these trees were employed principally as fences, and their utility in that respect may easily be conceived, for few trespassers would like the risk of finding themselves tossed in the air by a sort of vegetable catapulta!

The bath-plant has been already noticed; but here I perceived rain-trees growing in profusion, which required fences around them, for their spongy leaves absorbed the moisture of the atmosphere, and then, at the least change of temperature, they would suddenly collapse and discharge their contents in a shower of sweet-smelling liquid. There were certain animals which lived in the neighbourhood of these shrubs, and as their instinct taught them when the shower would descend, they congregated beneath its branches, and luxuriated in the cool and refreshing bath so kindly furnished them by nature.

Then there were other very curious trees which periodically fed upon herbage growing under their branches. These were very graceful indeed, and tended to their own interests in a most remarkable manner. For about a month they abstained from food, but in the interim they supported a sort of sweet grass growing at their roots, and from their branches they dropped a peculiar sort of essence,

which caused the herbage to spring up in rich luxuriance. When this had arrived at a state of perfection, owing to their solicitude and care, their branches gradually approached the ground, and at length touching it, they fixed their hollow leaves on the delicious moisture, and drank it up with evident gusto and delight. This done, they resumed their usual form, and began anew to drip sweet odour on the ground, and to replenish, as it were, their herbal banquet, till the time when hunger and thirst should again overtake them. I cannot impart an idea of the grace of these beautiful products of nature, for when their branches were bent on the ground, feeding on the sweets of their own culture, they formed a leafy and umbrageous tent, and when they again resumed their usual position, they did so gradually and advisedly, like a coryphée rising from a stage curtsey. Then, yet again, and the most beautiful of all were trees whose tendrils grew like the strings of a harp, which, twining around some adjacent

neighbour, increased in tension according to the temperature of the air, and by this means the melody which the breeze played varied according to the impulses of an invisible hand. Thus on the passing winds were sometimes tremulously recorded what the elder writers termed a Sub-Dorian air; sometimes an Æolian strain; sometimes a soft Sicilian tone, to which the sweet birds danced, and the little leaves twirled on their stems with delight; and, anon, when the breeze was strong, the sterner Doric harmony would awake the grove, and then the tender and listening birds would flutter away to their secret homes, till softer voices again issued from the glades.

These sounds in the primeval forests of the Sun must have been sublime in the extreme, for then Nature, on a vast scale, listened to music of her own composing, and tempered her wildest notes with the gentle sigh of Æolian whispers.

At this moment my attention was drawn from these wonderful vegetable musicians, as

well as from Alûtedon's description of them, by observing that we approached a sort of lodge, made of white minica, where several carriages were drawn up, which by a sort of inspiration I felt belonged to the royal party.

I only wish I could have sent, per Meteoric Delivery Company, one of these exquisite vehicles to be raffled for by the belles of London. In colour and in substance they resembled that delicate pink portion of a shell which, with its inward blush, suggests all sorts of love-making down in the sea-depths. In form, too, the carriages were conchial, and were furnished with wheels without tires; for, by a peculiar contrivance, each spoke possessed an elastic spring just at the point of its articulation with the nave, so that at every evolution an onward motion was imparted, independent of any power the driver himself might exert. The lining of these beautiful conveyances was made from the breasts of love-birds, being a voluntary present from the pretty creatures; for

so amiable were they in disposition, that they assumed their most beautiful hues just before they died, on purpose to bequeath their valuable bosoms for the use of the royal family.[1]

"We are in luck," said Alûtedon; "for I perceive the Prince has arrived, and we shall see the beasts in all their glory."

"Beasts, Alûtedon!—what mean you?"

"Why, my dear friend, I told you we were about to investigate the zoology of the Sun; and we have arrived at the place wherein are collected specimens from all parts of the sphere. But come, let us lose no time."

With this we alighted, and entered the garden, wondering to myself whether the

[1] This is surely a sly hit at the fabulous stories told respecting the swan singing sweetest when he dies, or of the civet biting off the pouch containing his perfume, so that by giving the hunters all they require, the animal is permitted to escape. Or perhaps it is an indirect reference to some of the absurdities gravely laid down as facts by the elder naturalists, such, for example, as Aristotle, according to Athenæus, declaring that "from a worm, after its change, there is produced a caterpillar, from which comes the humble-bee, and from that the larva of the silkworm!"

Princess accompanied her husband. Oh, frail nature! — misguided heart even in Helios! I had, however, no time for reflection, for at this moment came trundling along what I at first thought was a hoop, with its centre filled up; but I soon observed it was neither more nor less than an animal, with his head in the centre of his body.

The expression of his features as he turned round and round were irresistibly comic, and the creature's face was so arranged that the eyes always fell in the proper position whichever portion of his circular body happened to be uppermost; and this was achieved by means of his head being fixed on a pivot, with an excess of weight in his chin. When he perceived us, off he trundled up a by-path, and even Alûtedon laughed heartily at his droll appearance.

"Well," said I, "it is good that you possess something grotesque in this planet, if only for the sake of contrast, for a queerer-looking creature than that I never saw."

"The little gentleman is by no means

handsome, yet very useful, for he rolls our paths—but what think you of that species yonder ?"

This question referred to a brute of the size of an ox, but very fat, and his body a perfect cube. From his nostrils issued steam generated in its own inside, by the force of which it propelled itself along. Its stomach was a furnace, the food it ate were the coals, the water it drank turned to steam, and little wheels grew from the bones of his pelvis.

At this moment, my attention was distracted from the living locomotive by something descending from the clouds, and then almost as rapidly running up a perpendicular line. This was, in fact, a cloud-spider, which, by spinning a fine web from the nebular texture, descended or ascended with surprising alacrity. The animal was about four feet in diameter, nearly transparent, and so delicately formed, that he looked more like a phantom bandalore on a string than a real insect. His food was the last sigh of a dying "star-bird," which feathered

creatures he caught in his net as they flew about in the regions of his skyey abode. The whole tribe were very shy (animals that prey upon others usually are, save in a profession which shall be nameless), and if, during their descent from the clouds, they perceived an object directly beneath them, they could swerve to any side they pleased, or could run up their line again, and become lost in the fleecy heights.

"Look!" exclaimed Alûtedon; "here is something worthy your attention, and pray leave the sky-spiders to their own diversions."

My friend pointed out a cluster of small, black-looking things, lying on a flower-bed, somewhat resembling round plums. Upon touching the little group with his stick, they immediately separated one from the other, and a globular film arose from the body of each, precisely like a soap-bubble blown from the bowl of a tobacco-pipe. These increased to about a foot in diameter, and then the whole family arose into the air, glistening with prismatic rays, and the

breezes soon wafted them to some more undisturbed retreat, when, no doubt, their little balloon-like appendages collapsed, and they again huddled together on the ground, near some favourite plant or flower. I should never have been tired of following this interesting family from spot to spot, allowing them to settle, and then poking them up again; but, fortunately for them, a voice came wafted on the air, which seemed to vibrate over every nerve of my body, and scarcely had I time to repress the feeling, when an abrupt turn brought us face to face with the royal party.

The Prince advanced, and embraced me in the most cordial manner. The Princess welcomed me with smiles (Heliosweet was not present), while some three or four (of course) beautiful children hung back, with shy glances, just as at their tender years they might be supposed to do, especially when an inhabitant from another world was present.

"Well, Heliophilus," said Helionax, "what

do you think of our collection of living curiosities?"

"I scarcely know, dear Prince," I answered, "whether to admire most the beauty of your floral and horticultural productions, or the grotesque forms and peculiar habits of your animals. It seems to me that you have here fully represented genteel comedy, vaudeville, and farce."

"And opera too," said he, laughing; "of the merits of which you will now have an opportunity of judging, since, for the express diversion of these young people (alluding to his children), a little concert is about to take place.

And here commenced, on a platform in front of us, the strangest exhibition it was ever my lot to witness, consisting of the solo performances of musical animals![1] One of these creatures, somewhat resembling a horse, was brought forward by an ap-

[1] If these brute-musicians be suggestive of *bêtise amère*, will the amiable reader remember they were exhibited for the amusement of the "young people," and are here described for a similar object.

propriately dressed individual, at a certain sign from whom the animal raised his mane erect into strings, and puffed out his chest as a sounding-board. By an innate impulse he caused the chords to vibrate, and as the melody increased in power, the creature began to caper to his own playing; all of which diverted me quite as much as it delighted the children. The Prince assured me it required considerable care and patience to make the beasts of this order play in tune and dance in time. In a wild state, he told me, this noise was terribly discordant, excepting during periods of love-making,[1] when the air, passing through the maney strings, owing to softened impulses, produced very appropriate and pleasing tones. This exhibition naturally reminded me of what Aristotle relates of dancing horses;[2] but an animal stranger still came and made his bow.

[1] The harmonising effect of love and beauty is always insisted upon.

[2] In his "History of the Constitution of Sybaris," wherein he relates that the people of Crotona, being at war with the Sybarites, played those airs upon the flute to which the horses

In appearance he was like our green and gold monkeys, only very large, and his face wore that demure expression so provocative of mirth in the beholder. I was curious to know what possible instrument *he* played upon, and greatly was I astonished when he lifted his tail, placed the tip of it in his mouth, and proceeded to use it precisely as though it were a veritable flageolet. At this I was afraid I should literally expire with laughter, by no means decreased by the children joining me in chorus. The tune was a light and merry one, while the performer looked as sedate and demure as if he were piping forth the laws of his country. His variations were wonderful, as were also his skilful manipulations of the stops and holes in the prehensile portion of his body. The solo ended, he bowed with great gravity, and hopped off grave and sententious.

A third animal was now led on to the

of the Sybarites were taught to dance, so that when the animals heard the familiar strains, they took to capering, and ran over to the ranks of the enemy. Charon of Lampsacus tells a similar story, for which see the Deipnosophists, b. xii.

platform, whose performance, though not so grotesque as the rest, was far more melodious. This gentleman resembled a gigantic ichneumon, with an elongated nose, and he sat like a kangaroo on his haunches. Two pouches in his cheeks collected the wind, which, passing through his nasal organ, produced musical tones according to the laws which regulate wind instruments. The airs he played were really beautiful, and the airs he gave himself highly amusing. He concluded with a sort of fanfare, performing many bravura passages quite worthy of Beaumont or Kœnig. Indeed, the tones produced were similar to those of a bassoon and a cornet-à-piston blended in one.

To this solo performance succeeded a concert; and, as a large concourse of people were now assembled (there was no staring at the royal party, no pressing rudely around them), the Prince took the opportunity of inviting me to a little stroll with him alone, and placing his arm through mine, was leading me away, when at the same moment

I met the glance of the Princess—a glance which sent the blood dancing through my veins, and made my heart beat, as I believed, almost audibly, for the language conveyed by the look was quite impossible to misinterpret. Never till then did I feel the full force of what the Greek poet calls "the soft dart of eyes,"[1] and their soft lashes fell over the blushes which mantled on her cheeks like a silken curtain descending over the rosy abode of all the Loves.

Scarcely knowing whither I went, I allowed the Prince to lead me down an unexplored path, but I succeeded so ill in concealing my agitation, that my conductor must have observed it, had it not been that his attention was just then diverted from the poor, embarrassed, love-stricken animal walking by his side to a group of splendid-looking fellows which had been lately brought from some foreign quarter of the globe. They were sitting at the door of a very pretty residence, built for their comfort and conve-

[1] μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος of Æschylus.

nience, and at this moment were engaged in the agreeable and innocent occupation of fanning each other with the ends of their tails!

"These animals in a wild state," said the Prince, "are quite allies of their cousins in the floral kingdom, for they live under the shadow of a certain plant which requires for its well-being a constant current of air to pass through its leaves, and the creatures are provided with fan-like tails, for the purpose of raising the wind when the breezes of nature are hushed. Sometimes, as you perceive, they use them as articles of luxury."

I laughed heartily at my companion's quaint manner of imparting this intelligence, which served in some manner to dispel my previous confusion, and we then proceeded to traverse the gardens, and to investigate every description of living thing. The numerous explanations with which Helionax favoured me, would only interest the purely scientific reader; but they proved in a most remarkable manner the care with which Nature

works for the comfort and happiness of her creatures, and how thoroughly she prevents a fore-instinct of evil or death. In return, I imparted to the Prince, as well as I was able, an idea of our own natural history,—sketching for him the progress of our discoveries from the time of Ælian, Aristotle, Pliny, Solinus, Theophrastus, and that voluminous and most marvellously inaccurate writer Aldrovandus, down to the period which ushered in the illustrious names of Linnæus, Cuvier, and Buffon, filling up the interstices to the best of my poor ability. The Prince was especially interested by my description of the American naturalist[1] lying for hours like a log in the forests of the New World, so that, by becoming eavesdropper at the cabinet councils of the

[1] It is scarcely possible to conceive any fact in natural history more interesting than the manner in which Audubon and his wife pursued their investigations into the facts of ornithology. Retiring from the world, they immured themselves in the sylvan homes of animated nature, and by indomitable patience and an all-absorbing love of the subject, they extracted secrets from the living denizens of the forest never before imparted to man.

feathered aborigines, he might arrive at a knowledge of all their political and social institutions; returning thence to the haunts of men, to draw with magic pencil the scenes he had witnessed in the still and solemn fastnesses of Nature's glades. Our conversation on these subjects was long and interesting, after which we recommenced our examination of all the strange birds, beasts, and fishes which enjoyed life in these gardens appropriated to their hospitable reception.

Several specimens of the finny tribe had the power of rendering themselves invisible, so that they might seize their prey, while others sang little soothing airs with their noses out of the water, attracting thereby curious gadflies, who, having no Ulysses to bid them stop their ears, became the victims of the Syren-fish.

Some of the birds were furnished with flame-coloured breasts, which were covered with a glittering metallic gelatinous substance, and the moths and butterflies, being

at night attracted by the fiery colour, flew to enjoy its lustre, and of course became stuck on the delusive bosoms of the feathery cheats. This always happened during roosting time, so that upon waking up in the morning the birds found their larder well supplied without any trouble, fatigue, or expense. They, however, in their turn, paid the penalty for a Sybarite existence, inasmuch as they became so fat and handsome that a species of hawk often paid rather more than polite attention to the flame-breasted lady, and if her husband exercised any symptom of jealousy, he was at once eaten up for his pains.[1] Of the sort of Nemesis which overtook the hawk I am unable to speak, but doubtless he in his turn met his reward, for every seeming injustice in Nature resolves itself into some beautiful expedient, if we follow her mutations with prudence and care.

Not to linger too long in these captivating

[1] It is stated, but not upon sufficient creditable authority, that if the "Jealous Hornbill" finds the marks of another bird, during his absence in search of food, he encloses his mate in her nest and leaves her to perish.

gardens, I pass over many matters of interest; but there was one animal so useful and so strange, that I must indulge in a brief description of its character. The Prince leading the way, we approached a sort of enclosed lawn, where lay in placid repose a strange serpent-like looking production of nature, but which, grotesque as it was, established in an extraordinary degree the close harmony existing between the laws of colour, form, and sound. This peculiarity was shown in the following manner. A strain of music was played, and immediately the animal, awaking from his seemingly torpid condition, raised himself up, and listened with evident enjoyment, striving meanwhile to catch the exact character of the strain. As the tune proceeded and its rhythm became defined, the body of the creature assumed undulatory forms of the most graceful description, and his colour also changed according to the strain, and varied with its every modulation. A chromatic scale produced on his sensitive form

prismatic shades, while the prolongation of a single note developed a single corresponding hue, but the moment this note gave way to another, sympathetic tints glistened on his beautiful skin. So exquisitely susceptible was he of music in its most delicate mode of expression, that at my request the musical scale was ascended by quarter tones; and even this fractional division of sound caused a corresponding effect both of the animal's form and the succession of colours. A note of discord immediately produced a contortion of motion, and a general dark neutral tint over his surface; at this, too, he was evidently extremely displeased. I then asked the musicians to try the effect of ascending the scale by fifths, and I observed that the curve his body then assumed, described, as near as I could guess, an arc of about 30 degrees, and that his colour was a light blue. A minor third produced a red colour, and his body became a perfect conic section. Then a discord of a second and seventh threw him into an agony, and his

bright hues grew muddy in an instant; but as suddenly assumed new forms of elegance and vividness of surface when the concords of the scale restored him to enjoyment. All these changes were strictly in accordance with certain arbitrary laws governing sound, colour, and form, having no doubt a common origin, making due allowance for the different media required for the different effects.

I must acknowledge this strange animal and its wonderful sensibilities attracted me more than any object I had yet met with, and I was not the less interested when I discovered, that if the music was below concert pitch he became lethargic and indifferent, but if above concert pitch, he grew savage and dangerous to approach.

"I need scarcely tell you," said Helionax, evidently amused at the various experiments I tried on my susceptible friend, "that the animal is a most useful one to our artists, for they obtain a knowledge of certain fixed rules in the departments of optics, acoustics,

and geometry, owing to the natural impulse of this *tria juncta in uno*. There are some geniuses, however, which never seem to require guidance, and who appear to grapple with the truths and harmonies of nature without approaching them by the usual paths of study and research."

"Ah, Prince!" I exclaimed, "such an one dwelt in the planet of my birth——"

"I am happy to say," said my companion, interrupting, "we know to whom you allude, for the wings of his fancy swept the regions of the stars, and his genius, extending to the opposite confines of the vigorous and tender, filled up the interstices with all those treasures of eternal truths which nature held ready for his use, like a handmaiden waiting on her lord."

I bowed, and thanked the Prince for this compliment paid to our "Bard of Avon," and at the same moment, our stroll having been circuitous, we found the Princess, Alûtedon, and the young people, where we had previously left them. At sight of the

bewitching Heliotrope all my previous agitation returned; and on my thanking the Prince for his urbanity and condescension, I again remarked in the Princess's features that same expression of regard which spoke in her lovely eyes and crimsoned her soft cheek. Almost delirious with the certainty that such a glance could not by any possibility be misinterpreted, I was glad to hurry from the spot, lest the intoxication of my senses should be as manifest to others as the feeling was overwhelming to myself. Fortunately I was not left to my own reflections, for I returned at once to Alûtedon's domicile, and after partaking of a very elegant little dinner, and enjoying afterwards a ramble in some extensive gardens, illuminated by flowers, I returned home, glad to take refuge from the external world in the solitude of my sweet retreat. Again a vision of angelic loveliness flittered before me, now fading to a mere outline, now mocking me by a near approach, but ever beaming with all those unutterable graces which

had entangled my heart in a thousand meshes. Again the symphony which greeted me as I sank to repose was of a plaintive and sad kind—so sad, indeed, that, after a night of wakeful visions, the dewy eyelids of another morn lifted their fringe of night, and beamed joy on all things, save on my own restless and uneasy spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

PENULTIMATE.

LOVE—SAIDIPH—THE SIBYL'S GLASS—THE STATUE—DISCUSSIONS—VISIBLE AIR—COMPENSATION—RHAPSODY—DISCOVERY—CITY OF LABOUR—CLOUD-FABRICS—CURIOUS TESTS—AIR-PIGMENTS—MAKING OF MINICA—THE PRINCESS—FLOWER-CAGE—MUSIC-FOOD—A LADY'S PHILOSOPHY—NATURE'S JUSTICE—BLONDEL-BIRD—ANIMATE STATUES—RETROSPECT—CONFESSION—SLEEP IN THE GARDEN.

It was useless to disguise the fact that my unlucky destiny had involved me in an impassioned love for the Princess Heliotrope; and putting aside the absurdity of loving the Sovereign Lady of Heliopolis, taking no heed of the ambitious flight of my unruly desires, I felt grieved, beyond language to express, that one unworthy sentiment should dwell within myself, when all around me in the moral world teemed with noble and glorious impulses. Still I loved her; every

moment of my existence came laden with thoughts of her marvellous beauty,—ay, and of her worth and virtue,—and then, with almost a pang, I remembered the moment when our eyes met, and the blood went tingling through my veins with an indescribable feeling of pleasure and yet anguish. What could I do—what course was I to pursue? Should I confide to Alûtedon the state of my feelings; or should I beseech the Prince to permit me to travel in his dominions; or was there any possibility of my returning to Earth? In vain I attempted to dissipate these thoughts; in vain I sauntered in the city, where curiosity was never satisfied, investigation never limited. In vain I breathed forth almost despairing appeals to the great Unseen, to destroy in embryo the threatened birth of folly and sin; in vain was it all, and I loved hopelessly on, upbraiding myself for my perfidy, yet seeking every opportunity to partake of the poisoned draught which was consuming me day by day.

During my wanderings through the city I had observed certain sculptured figures in a court-yard, so miraculously life-like that I requested Alûtedon to give me an introduction to the sculptor; and this simple occurrence influenced the future of my life.

The name of my new acquaintance was Saidiph,[1] and the productions of his hand were of magical beauty. His power, too, of hitting off the exact likeness of the living, rendered the judgment of the beholder perfectly confounded as to whether the figures were living and breathing forms.

As our acquaintance ripened into friendship, I one day ventured to request that he would mould me an image of the Princess Heliotrope; and my surprise may well be imagined when he replied:

"I have anticipated your desire, dear Heliophilus, and this very day I will put a few finishing touches to the figure, and will send her to your abode."

"By all the stars!" I exclaimed, "how

[1] This seems an anagrammatic spelling of Phidias.

did you know I desired to possess such a treasure?"

"Oh," said he, carelessly, "I received my instructions from the palace; for ladies, you know, are so uncommonly skilful in discerning the hidden desires of the heart, especially when they are a little bit wrong, that perhaps a shrewd guess on the part of the Princess might have been the secret of her knowledge."

My confusion at this unexpected speech was too apparent for Saidiph not to observe, and he rejoined, in a tone of playful mockery, totally unlike his usual style:

"It certainly is very strange, but the ladies of this planet evince far greater partiality to strangers than to the inhabitants of its soil. Their imaginations are, I suppose, excited by novelty, and some of the handsomest chevaliers of the Sun are eclipsed by fantastic denizens of other worlds."

I was too well satisfied in believing the truth of my friend's words to dwell upon the ill-compliment they involved, and I only

inquired how I was to cancel the obligation he was about to bestow upon me—what beautiful fancy, or elegant sentiment, could I offer?

"My commission," answered he, "comes direct from head-quarters; but if you will send me some little poem of your own composing connected with your curious planet, I shall be obliged. Remember, Heliophilus," he added, "the affair is a secret between us, and I depend on your discretion and honour."

I took my leave of the artist, scarcely knowing whether I returned home by means of wings or legs; for not only like a second Pygmalion was I now to receive from the hands of a Praxiteles of the Sun an almost breathing likeness of the empress of my world of thoughts, but, from what I could gather, the boon privately came from the adored being herself. "Yes," muttered I, "she must be aware of my secret adoration, and, added to the image enshrined in my heart, I am now to possess an external form of her glorious person, cut, it is true, from

a cold and senseless material; but the glow of my soul's love shall envelop it, and while I bathe its frigid outlines in the warmth of my passion, imagination shall be my slave, and conscience herself dare not intrude on the sacred worship, for conscience has nought to do with the adoration of the inanimate."

By such sophistry I permitted myself to give way to a passion extravagant as alluring, and by the means of the image of Heliotrope's dear self, I hoped to gain a little of that serenity of feeling which had fled since the first hour I passed in her society. Of course my vanity was very much flattered by my friend the sculptor requesting a little poetical effusion in return for the promised image of Heliotrope; indeed, my opinion of his judgment and talents was very much augmented by his desire.

With some degree of thought and care I shut myself up with no attendants but my own thoughts, and moulded an immaterial statuette from the clay of reflection, or, in

terms less metaphorical, my composition was an attempt to sketch, in a concentrated poetical form, the supposed progress of Creation, as suggested by the details of the physical sciences. I may here add that Saidiph expressed himself delighted with the poem, which good opinion I of course attributed to the certainty that the whole must have been the greatest puzzle to him.

THE SIBYL'S GLASS.

I.

If any think that life is worth,
With all its myst'ry, but a thought,
Oh, scan the records of the earth,
Then ask if life, indeed, be nought!
Yes—seek at once the sacred light,
'Twill shadow forth the early time,
When o'er the realms of endless night,
There brooded first the thought sublime.
Intensest fires 'midst fearful jar,
For æons blustered madly on;
While roaring waters joined the war,
But FORM arose from chaos soon—
Yes, there had pass'd a mighty word,
Primeval harmony was heard.

II.

The Sibyl's glass shows earth a fire
Condensing into scoria rude;
The while its raging flames retire
To burn in central solitude.[1]
But giant Force, a rebel still,
Amorphous masses flings on high;
The whirlpool and tornado fill
With terror ocean and the sky.
Volcanoes belch beneath the sea,
And mountains leap and first behold
The sun in his sublimity,
And seeing—find their summits gold!
Oh, there had pass'd a mighty word,
The GERM OF LIFE was spread abroad.

III.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
The sun from forth his vast domain
Doth send the Light, his messenger,
With warmth and colour in her train;
The beams, through liquid fields of blue
Rejoice the earth and bid it glow,
And bathe it in the burnished hue
We saw the mountain-tops but now.

[1] "That the interior of the earth is in a fluid state by heat is probable from the fact, that its temperature increases at the rate of 1 deg. of Fahrenheit for every 65 feet in depth, so that at a depth of 50 miles the temperature would be twice that which would be sufficient to melt iron."—SIR DAVID BREWSTER.

How strangely grand!—the worlds afar
Are linked to earth by golden ray,
And every planet, every star
Are but a part of unity.
Yes, star with star, and sun with sun,
Hold a divine communion![1]

IV.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
The scene is chang'd, and deep repose
Descends upon the sleeping sphere,
And lulls to rest its mighty throes;
Then harmonies akin to love
Are loosened from their home divine,
And over all creation move
To chasten, elevate, refine.
And yet the wondrous, peaceful scene
Is prelude to more wondrous birth;
For LIFE at length is ushered in,
Its awful spirit moves on earth.
Yes, there had pass'd a mighty word,
And mystery to its depths was stirr'd.

[1] "From Nature's chain, whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."
POPE'S *Essay on Man*.

"The chain that's fixed to the throne of Jove,
On which the future of the world depends,
One link dissolved, the whole creation ends."
WALLER.

v.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
Though earth with teeming life be blest,
The simpler works alone are here,
But being perfect, prompt the rest.[1]
Rolling cycles rise and fall,
But merely points of ages die,
For what are cycles, ages, all,
When reckoned by eternity!
Rolling cycles rise and fade,
And Love, the "fairest of the fair,"
Appears in beauty fresh array'd,
And sweetly beameth everywhere—
Yes, there had pass'd a mighty sound,
And love and beauty breath'd around.

VI.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
Creations new rise one by one;
Now gaudy insects paint the air,
The children of the golden sun.
And birds bedecked in gorgeous dress,
Like notes of music fly along—
A music taught by happiness,
For joy intense breaks forth in song.

[1] "The botanist discovers the constancy of the gyratory motion of the chara in the greater number of vegetable cells, and recognises in the genera and natural families of plants the intimate relations of organic life."—*Kosmos*.

Their counterparts,[1] the flowrets bloom
With wings, and voice, and plumage too,
Their petals wings, their voice perfume,
Their plumage caught from rainbow-hue.
For there had pass'd a gentle force,
Weaving the spells of nature close.

VII.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
Another age hath been a dream;
And higher types of life appear,
Perfecting still creation's scheme.
While ever as an epoch bright
Doth culminate above the rest,
Another phase more exquisite
Is born from that, but now the best.

[1] Many, no doubt, have marked the beautiful similitude between different species of flowers and the smaller tribe of birds. Some of the creeping plants seem to put forth their little *leafy wings*, while certainly they make progress with them! In like manner, the perfume of a flower (its voice) touches us by association, as the song of a bird. The flowers, too, close their petals at night, and may be said poetically to slumber; while in colours the likeness is striking, especially in the Indian Archipelago. The Phyllium Siccifolium so closely resembles a leaf, that, without a minute examination, it is impossible to distinguish it from one; and towards autumn its wings become brown and withered!

The attribute of God-like thought
Is ever to increase its own,
When to a seeming limit brought
It bears afresh a mightier one.[1]
And each doth take eternal place,
Like *immaterial* stars in space!

VIII.

But turn again, the glass is clear:
The world is bathed in love and light;
And light and love with joy prepare
For earth another sacred rite.
Awaiting this, it rests awhile,
And viewing all its rich excess,
Its inward heart gives forth a smile,
The glow of its own loveliness.
And as that smile—the brightest one
Since first commenced creation's plan—
Illumes the world—the work is done,
It ushers in the spirit MAN!
The teeming earth makes festival,
And yields to man its beauties all.

IX.

And what is man? How dimly flit
The shadows which would fain reply;
With all his lore he must admit
Himself the greatest mystery.

[1] "Nature, as a celebrated physiologist has defined it, and as the word was interpreted by the Greeks and Romans, is, 'that which is ever growing and ever unfolding itself in new forms.'"—HUMBOLDT.

He must allow his brief career
Is but a skein in Nature's loom,
He cannot think he dwelleth here
To limit marvels yet to come;
He cannot comprehend the love
Which breathes throughout the magic spell;
The simplest form of life doth prove
To him, profoundest miracle.
Art thou the link of higher mould
The womb of time will yet unfold?[1]

X.

But turn again, the glass is bright:
Whate'er the problem dark may be;
Above, around, there shines a light
To bid him onward hopefully—

[1] "By piecing the two records together—that revealed in Scripture, and that revealed in the rocks—records which, however widely geologists may mistake the one, or commentators misunderstand the other, have emanated from the same great author, we learn that in slow and solemn majesty has period succeeded period, each in succession ushering in a higher and yet higher scene of existence—that fish, reptiles, mammiferous quadrupeds, have reigned in turn,—that responsible man, 'made in the image of God,' and with dominion over all creatures, ultimately entered into a world ripened for his reception; but further, that this passing scene, in which he forms the prominent figure, is not the final one in the long series, but merely the last of the *preliminary* scenes; and that that period to which the bygone ages, incalculable in amount, with all their well-proportioned gradations of being, form the imposing vestibule, shall have perfection for its occupant, and eternity for its duration."—*Footprints of the Creator, by* HUGH MILLER.

A light whose beams about him fall
As closely as the folding air,
For they are Nature's wonders all
He views around him everywhere.
Yes, Science tells him nothing dies:
The smallest leaf from Autumn's spray,
Though seeming dead, but fructifies
To other shapes from out decay[1]—
Then sure it were a strange belief
To rank the soul beneath the leaf!

XI.

And what the soul? Ah, once again
Dim shadows crowd the clear reply,
And e'en the Sibyl seeks in vain
To answer, save by simile:
"A matchless diamond set in lead
The soul is, in its earthy zone,
With rays of light for ever fed:
Its setting crumbles, and is gone.
The diamond, too, in depths of earth
Long hidden by its fellow-clay,
Is, while obscured, of little worth,
But priceless in the beams of day.
So, for the soul such rays of light,
From heaven above, are requisite."

[1] "Chaque monde peut-être n'est qu'un atome, et chaque atome est un monde."—MADAME DE STAEL.

XII.

But turn again, the mirror scan:
Again the Sibyl's art we test,
When we demand of gifts to man
Which for himself is noblest—best?
The shining oracle replies
That "TRUTH[1] is noblest, most divine;
For truth it is which simplifies
And aids the progress of design.
Man scarcely thinks one falsity
By lip or word makes nature grieve,
And stays her course to rectify;
One thread untrue she cannot weave:
The warp and woof, divinely fair,
Reject all spot and blemish there."

XIII.

And what is nature?—how begun,
What the cause, and where the source?
Doth HE not leave—the mighty ONE—
Some guiding tracklight of his course?

[1] "In primis, hominis est propria VERI inquisitio atque investigatio. Itaque cum sumus negotiis necessariis, curisque vacui, tum avemus aliquid videre, audire, ac discere, cognitionemque rerum, aut occultarum aut admirabilium, ad benè beatéque vivendum necessariam ducimus; ex quo intelligitur quod VERUM, simplex, sincerumque sit, id esse naturæ hominis aptissimum. Huic veri videndi cupiditati adjuncta est appetitio quædam principatûs, ut nemini pacere animus benè a naturâ informatus velit, nisi præcipienti, aut docenti, aut utilitatis causâ justé et legitimé imperanti: ex quo animi magnitudo existit, et humanarum rerum contemtio."—CICERO, *De Officiis*, lib. i. § 13.

Oh, surely yes! the stars on high
Which gem the sable robe of night,
Are hieroglyphics of the sky,
Which name that word of awful might.
The Sun, too, with his lips of fire,
In blazing lustre speaks the name;
And other systems rising higher
Write it, in more distant flame.
But where the source, and what the cause?
Ah! here the mind must shrinking pause.

XIV.

For mind doth bend beneath the thought
Which grapples the idea of space;
When intellect is highest wrought,
A little speck it can but trace.
The image of eternity
We cannot pass before the mind;
When million Æons picture we,
The same are left before—behind.
In manner like, the human soul,
Filled and glowing with its God,
Knows but a fraction of the whole,
An unit of infinitude.
The power alone is given to man
To view, to worship,—not to span.

XV.

Turn once again: the shadows pass
Within the mirror, and we see
Forms of light, which make the glass
Dazzling with refulgency.

Love—the maiden[1]—smileth there,
Bidding man be not afraid,
For Intellect is chaining Fear,
While Truth is lending him his aid.
Dogma strives to set Fear free,
And Cant is doing all his best
To imitate true Piety,
And roam abroad as she is drest.
But Knowledge rends the false pretence,
And Cant is yoked to Ignorance.

XVI.

And Science, too, whose massive brow
Betokens thought and daring will,
Has made with Art a holy vow,
To range the world to conquer ill.
'Tis Science makes the earth a fane,
And life itself a lengthened prayer;
The grandest sun, the smallest grain,
In miracles true light appear.
The maxima and minima
Of wonders keen-eyed Science knows,
Searching near, yet glancing far,
A grain dissects, a planet shows;
While dainty Art with palette near,
Copies all most good and fair.

[1] That is, the Erôs, not the Anterôs.

XVII.

Then Hope perennial springs afresh;
. Though often under Sceptic's sway
"The age we live in" bursts the mesh,
And endeth her captivity.
Bright Intellect on highest throne,
Whose lustre Pride essays to dim,
Calls Knowledge forth, his dearest son,
And weds the blushing maid to him.
Thus Hope and Knowledge, wedded now,
Their destiny to best fulfil,
Join Art and Science, in their vow,
To range the world, to conquer ill.
The shadows deepen—now are past,
But Hope was one which lingered last.

In due course the statue arrived, and never shall I forget my transport of delight when I discovered that Saidiph had outshone himself, for he had hit off in a marvellous manner the grace and dignity of the original, while, owing to an art peculiar to sculptors in the Sun, the breath of life seemed positively to dwell within her bosom, which appeared to rise and fall under the folds of a dress so exquisitely fine, that Signor Monti himself would have despaired to reach such

perfection. I placed the lovely image in a befitting position, in a sort of alcove, amongst foliage and flowers, sheltered by a sylvan screen, and I relinquished myself to the bewitching idolatry; speaking to the divinity as though my impassioned tones must in time warm its coldness and impassibility into life and animation.

In the mean while, my visits to the Palace continued, and about this time a grand meeting of the dignitaries of the empire was convened to discuss various matters connected with science, art, and literature. It was well for this singular people that all the lesser evils of life were readily subdued, owing to the simplicity of their life and the purity of their physical nature. Perfection herself, however, needs contrast for a correct appreciation; and even in this sphere, where ill health was readjusted by a little change of odoriferous diet, or by removal to some spot where the air was more or less attenuated—even here, the higher virtues and the more exalted forms of beauty pos-

sessed their several degrees of excellence. Notwithstanding, therefore, the general immunity from that which we terrene mortals term evil and vice, still evil and vice had a modified representation in those excellences lowest on the scale of good; and for the purpose of discussing these and similar matters connected with the morals and improvement of the people, an assemblage met every three years in Heliopolis. All those who were able to suggest new ideas relating to ethics, or new discoveries in science, or new inventions in the moral or material world, were expected to attend, and to subscribe the full burden of their intellects for the general weal.

Amongst the topics discussed, RELIGION naturally came first and foremost; and this was subdivided under general heads, such as—

Religion considered in reference to the sublimation of the soul.

Religion as applied to the ordinary conduct of life.

Religion as absolutely emanating from a

direct love of the Unseen, regardless of the precise form of its manifestation.

Religion viewed as to its political and social influences on individuals; and its effects therefrom considered in the aggregate.

Religion most commendable when arising from its forming the whole tone, key-note, and harmony of the living being; governing his actions without consideration of his own benefit, and influencing his conduct by the united principles of faith, love, and gratitude.[1]

Present sacrifice solely for a future good to be avoided, inasmuch as religion's subtle and refined attributes are injured and impaired thereby.

Then the moral forms of excellence were next discussed, and were proved to be in

[1] The subject of our own beautiful Creed is touched upon at page 93, and I sincerely trust in a manner which cannot offend the religious sensibilities of the most scrupulous. In a work purely speculative the theme requires little more than a passing and respectful allusion, but it is impossible to narrate the imaginary manners and habits of a people without at least a reference to the great and grand feature in their assumed existence. Heaven herself dare not utterly

harmony with certain fixed laws, one growing necessarily out of the other, by causes as arbitrary, and something similar to those which direct the rules of harmony and musical progression.

Then came an animated speech from several of the assembly upon the outward and visible forms of beauty, with a curious revelation as to the causes of the appreciation of external things (such as the muscles of the eye moving on curves, page 98): showing also how all the phenomena in nature grow out of elementary causes, all equally possible to arrange and classify by synthesis or analysis; and how, by slow and arduous retrograde steps, the thousand ramifications which spring from first principles may be traced. Thus one learned individual ex-

ignore the subject. It was not until after the passage at page 93 was printed, that I met, in Sir David Brewster's "More Worlds than One," with the subjoined passage from Dr. Bentley's "Confutation of Atheism:"

"Neither need we be solicitous about the condition of those planetary people, nor raise *frivolous disputes how far they may participate in* Adam's *fall or in the benefits of* Christ's *incarnation*. As if because they are supposed to be *Rational* they must needs be concluded to be *Men*."

hibited the manner in which the acorn produces the oak; while another took a small oak-tree, and folded every leaf in the form of its first unfolding, pushing the bark as it were into the stem, then the stem into the branch, then the branch into the trunk, then the trunk into the roots, then the roots into the acorn! By this means retracing Nature's steps, and following her till his brother-labourer took up the theme, and went deeper still into the mysteries of germination.

Next came an exhibition of fresh discoveries in science and art; no effect being permitted to be shown unless the cause could be satisfactorily explained, thereby preventing science from becoming a mere exhibition for the amusement, not the instruction, of the multitude. A propos to this, a paper was read by one of the members, descriptive of his experiments in making the atmosphere visible,[1] with its tides, eddies,

[1] By subjecting our own atmospheric air to the influence of electricity, it has been converted into aquafortis!

and currents, together with a distinct view of every impurity it might contain, were they ten thousand times less than the smallest spores known to our own investigators of floating fungi.[1]

Next a subject of absorbing interest was discussed, being an attempt to prove that the eternal justice of the Creator is manifested by a law fixed as that of gravitation,—being an all-pervading principle of COMPENSATION, concentrating and neutralising every item of discord in the harmony of nature.[2] This part of the topic

[1] Microscopic investigations into atmospheric impurities have detected spores the 27,000th part of an inch, or even less. Ehrenberg, with a microscope magnifying 800 times, discovered monads whose bodies amounted to $\frac{1}{1000}$ of a Parisian line. To this, the smallest animal discovered, he gave the name of "Monastermo." The "micrometer" is an instrument most curiously illustrative of human skill and ingenuity in furnishing means to exhibit, what Plato terms "the minute mechanism of the earth." It is ruled to no less than 6000 divisions to the inch! During the Exhibition, in 1851, an instrument was exhibited capable of showing the $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an inch.

[2] Amongst the many examples corroborative of this principle is the extraordinary sensibility of touch which the blind possess. It is even declared that by this sense they can distinguish colour! Nothing can be more interesting than a

was purely metaphysical, and too subtle for the pages of a "true history" treating more of persons than principles. Sufficient, therefore, to say, a mass of evidence was brought to bear on the subject perfectly overwhelming. Yes, the strength of its evidence went to demonstrate that no evil, no unhappiness, ever overtakes a created being, but what, in some way or other, Nature sets about making a recompense. Upon this basis, too, were built arguments in favour of the immortality of the soul; for the evident struggle of Nature to restore the just equilibrium would never be effectual, and in accordance with the known properties of all her mandates, except she had accorded her, the prolongation of a period to work in after death.

All these intellectual doings produced

visit to a blind asylum, where the inmates may be seen learning their Bibles by rapidly passing their hands over pages of embossed print. Those, too, who imagine that all delight in external nature is denied to the blind, should refer to the travels of Mr. Holman, who, with a total loss of sight, enjoyed his various peregrinations with a gusto perfectly marvellous.

quite a ferment in Heliopolis ; and it was curious to observe the excitement occasioned when some new form of beauty was described, arising, perhaps, from new combinations of curves, angles, colour, or substance; or when from the depths in the moral world new treasures were brought to light by analysis refined as profound.

As for myself, I felt, during the whole period, far more guilty than I really was; for as a speck is doubly visible in the sunshine, so the slightest moral turpitude stood out in strong relief when all around were purity and refinement. This feeling, too, increased day by day, till at length the contrast between my inner self and the outward world became perfect torture; so much so, indeed, that I fully made up my mind to communicate my feelings to the Prince himself, a resolution I might have put in practice but for an event which occurred to me about this time.

The reader will be good enough to remember, that in these regions the passion

which we term "love" partook of the general elevation of all other sentiments in the Helionic moral world, and its intensity bore proportion to the exquisite personal beauty of the women, and to the subtle refinement of their nature. Thus the love I experienced for some ideal form of beauty which should resemble Heliotrope was of a nature difficult to describe. I felt it was out of the nature of things to gain the affection of some living counterpart of her divine self and for the spirit ever to perish; nay, I almost felt that the aroma of her love, like the fabled essence in Jove's chalice, would impart immortality to the physical being. Oftentimes, on Earth, I had watched children casting pebbles into some placid stream, each forming the centre of little rings on the water, which expanded till they broke against the bank, and ceased to flow: in like manner, I felt that one little drop of pure affection, cast from above into the depths of human feeling, bids the circles of love to expand through space till they

touch the steps of their final home, the "eternal mansion."[1]

With these feelings in my soul, it can be well comprehended that my adoration of the divine statue was far too intense for expression; and though, no doubt, to the purely philosophic mind my proceedings would have entitled me to appear before a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*, yet I appeal to the youthful and loving hearts on Earth, whether we do not often set up an idol to worship, moulded in the intricate chambers of imagination and fancy? And if this be true, I ask them further, to make allowances for the strength of that worship concentrated on a true and perfect likeness of a true and perfect being, whom I dared not love in her living and breathing form! At all events, I have the example of antiquity[2] as my excuse, and I believe, also,

[1] Plato defines immortality, "animated essence and eternal mansion."

[2] Pygmalion is not the only hero who fell in love with a statue, for Clisophus the Salymbrian performed the same exploit with a Parian statue at Samos—a fact mentioned both by Alexis the Poet and Philemon.

the sympathy of warm hearts for my consolation.

Whether or no I am correct in this belief, certain it is, every moment of my solitude was spent in the presence of my inanimate goddess. I even went so far as to pour forth my soul in written characters, extravagant, I admit; but then, be it remembered, I enjoyed a prescriptive right to indulge a little in the Eastern style of language and metaphor.

I have the less hesitation in transmitting the rhapsody, owing to the moral certainty that no lover of the present day will think it worth his while to adopt it; for modern English young ladies (Heaven bless them!) relish far more a distinct assertion that they are beautiful, in unequivocal and prosaical terms, than the most ingeniously-turned compliment, albeit elegant, refined, and poetical. For the latter you obtain the character of being "a very odd person," or the exclamation, "Oh! you're a great deal too deep for me;" but for the former straight-

sailing and honest speech the lovely one sits to the piano, and makes a vocal melody by—"Villikins and his Dinah."[1] No, I am quite sure, no one will dare, not even on the 14th of February, to begin his love-ditty by terming his lady a lamp—if he did, so surely would he be questioned as to whether she were argand or camphine! However, here is my apostrophe to the beauteous being, with all its lunatical metaphors:

"Oh, Heliotrope! thou living lamp of "beauty, wrought by magician angels in the "laboratories of Heaven, Virtue herself hath "poured the oil of perfect sweetness into the "chambers of thy life! The ravished air "presses around thy form to feed the flame "of love which points with delicate pencil-

[1] I quote from memory, without knowing the source, a charming little distich, written during the wars of York and Lancaster. A cavalier, presenting the flower to a lady, discovers that the Rose is of the wrong colour, so he makes an elegant *amende* thus:

"If this fair flower offend thy sight,
It, in thy bosom bear;
'Twill blush to be outvied in white,
And turn Lancastrian there!"

"lings of lustre upward to thy home. The
"fickle light, for once subdued with love, has
"bound a diadem around thy brow; and dew
"from dainty asphodels falls on thy lips to tell
"all sweets henceforth how worthless they!
"The brightness of thy glance is chastened
"by the soul of unobtrusive discretion which,
"enthroned on thy brow, rules all the har-
"monies of thy inner self; while even the
"glorious external loveliness of thy form
"succumbs in smiles of tender submission to
"the master-tones of thy intellect—an intel-
"lect so finely strung, that Heaven's own
"whispers sweep a melody over its chords,
"and become translated in the language of
"thy every word and act."

With this little inflated heart-bubble, we will proceed with our narration.

One day when I had been indulging in a sort of trance, listening to the melodies of the musical reeds, and regarding my adorned statue just as some starving and thirsty wretch would regard petrified fruit, I perceived several dark objects over my head,

standing out in relief from the bright dome above me, which I at first considered must be some huge birds, but while I gazed they increased in size, and were evidently approaching the spot whereon my habitation stood. They performed certain gyrations, much in the manner of one of the feathered tribe before it reaches the ground, and as they drew closer I saw at once that instead of birds, they were nothing more nor less than a number of carriages containing people; and my sensations may better be conceived than described when the idea suddenly struck me that the Prince himself was the occupant, and that it was probably his intention to honour me by a visit. Considering that an image of the Princess was ensconced in the garden of my residence, which it would be difficult to conceal from an ordinary visitor, and perhaps impossible to hide from one who arrived in a manner so uncommon; considering that I had just been pouring forth [illegible]ration in strains even now vibrating [illegible]r.; considering, also, that the alcove

wherein reposed my divine figure was open *at the top*, it must be confessed I had no small grounds for apprehension, as narrower and narrower grew the circles which the carriages described, and nearer and nearer they approached my abode. Presently, in a whirr, which made the air rustle through the trees, the *cortége*, sweeping past their highest branches, descended in the most easy manner before my door. So, being relieved of the fear that the Prince would discover my secret from above, I hastily drew some hanging branches of a sort of amber plant before the entrance of the shrine, and hastened to meet my royal guest, feeling like a criminal approaching his judge. I was greatly reassured when, as Helionax drew nigh, I perceived the kindest smiles lighting his glorious features, and, embracing me, he exclaimed: "Wherefore hast thou deserted our halls? wherefore concealest thou thyself amid the foliage of silent groves, leaving the fair and amiable ladies of our world perpetually to ask one another, 'Where is the wanderer

from the planet Earth? Why comes he not within the circle of our smiles? Wherefore has he turned recluse, deserting the glowing belles of Heliopolis for the petal bells of the floral world?'" Then, dropping his tone of good-humoured banter, he continued—"What can you find, Heliophilus, to amuse or interest you here? And believing in reality there *is* nothing to absorb all your attention, I have called to enjoy a little unpremeditated chat—so let us walk in your sylvan arcades."

This proposition was the last in all the world I could desire; so, seeming not to heed it, I replied: "Perhaps, my gracious Prince, I had a presentiment that you would condescend to honour my abode with your presence, and to procure so great a boon I abstained from your glorious city."

"No," said he, playfully, "there is some attraction here, and I am anxious to discover your secret. However, I will not press its disclosure; but pray let us walk."

There was now no help for it; so, glanc-

ing timidly at the amber plants to see that they well concealed the statue, I saw with dismay that the light breeze kept perpetually wafting them to and fro, exposing every now and then a portion of the outline of the figure within. If discovered, I felt I must confess all; for though the thought suggested itself that I might perhaps escape from the Prince's displeasure if, when he perceived my hidden goddess, I declared I had turned sculptor, yet I must do myself the justice to aver, that the fear of his first anger was more bearable than the contempt which a falsehood would elicit, more especially as amongst the Helionites falsehood was considered so despicable that it was scarcely in their category of evil. But what *could* I do? for, as if in very mockery of my fears, the light wind still fanned the sylvan curtain I had so hastily drawn, and again a portion of my idol became apparent. I felt my only chance of diverting his attention from this dreaded spot was to involve him in some discussion; and as at this moment, most fortunately for me,

he seated himself on a bank, without any preamble I requested him to give me some idea of the geographical position of Heliopolis.

"Heliopolis," he replied, "is a city situated in an island surrounded by an ocean of different degrees of luminosity, according to the density of the Elytron which covers the bottom of the water. There are a thousand other countries studded over this immense globe containing inhabitants totally different from us, and with whom we hold no intercourse, at least until such time as, having passed through a probationary life, they are fitted to dwell here. They are compelled to struggle with vice and vanity, and those who are capable of standing the test, resisting certain temptations, and of developing a high moral nature, are permitted to reach the shores of this kingdom, and gradually through different stages to arrive at Heliopolis. Our coasts are so constructed, that all vessels bearing a single passenger unfit to arrive, are, owing to certain mechanical laws connected with the 'repulsion of particles,'

repelled by an innate force residing in the shore, and then they are obliged to return whence they come, and reject the person or persons whose evil nature had produced this result. Thus, the many being punished for the few, induces great care for the future in sifting the good from the bad. Supposing there is no adverse moral element on board, the vessels, by another law in mechanics relating to the 'attraction of cohesion,' approach the coast, and the voyagers therein are received by us, and made welcome. I am sure you will allow that in your world the evils attendant upon crime of every description are immediately spread over the whole community; and this law, which seems unjustly to make the innocent suffer with the guilty, is in reality a most necessary and just one, for without it society at large would grow indifferent to crime, because affecting only one person or spot."[1]

[1] The contagious nature of disease will ultimately prove a blessing, by forcing us to observe certain sanitary laws, which would for ever remain unobserved were the evils of disregarding them confined to fractional portions of the community.

"What a very odd arrangement," I exclaimed; "and pray, Prince, do any of your people ever pay a visit to those strange countries?"

"Yes," he said; "and they are permitted to return again if untainted by contact with the inhabitants; but too often adventurous spirits, relying overmuch upon their own power to resist evil, become contaminated; and when they would return home they are repelled as though they were utter strangers to the land."

"Is there no means of retrieving their position?"

"Yes, indeed! there is nothing in Nature to make a created being utterly hopeless; but the laws which govern the moral world are so constituted, that contact with crime after a while begets a love of it, by which means the two worlds of good and evil are held separate and distinct. You cannot ingraft crime on virtue, or virtue on crime; you cannot infuse one with the other; and

the palpable distinction is evidently intended by Nature."

At this moment the wind again wafted the flowers, which contained my statue, on one side, and left it exposed in such a way that concealment was no longer possible. The blood rushed to my temples, and I felt that my only chance was boldly to meet the difficulty, by confessing that the extreme beauty of the Princess had induced me to seek my friend Saidiph, and to obtain from him her likeness in stone; but just as I had made up my mind to do so, the Prince, glancing at the alcove—now all exposed to view—rose from his seat, and in a tone of voice impossible to describe, said: "The winds of Heaven have whispered your secret, Heliophilus, and discovered the cause of your deserting us for the attractions of your own solitude. Virtue, constancy, and devotion may achieve your object and requite your affection, but remember, no prize is won without the exercise of our best endeavours,

and the higher the object the greater amount of wisdom is required."

It need scarcely be asserted that this speech of the Prince perfectly astounded me, and deprived me of all power of reply. Instead of a burst of indignation, or the exhibition of a calm and stern severity, the discovery of the Princess's counterpart had the effect of eliciting just such a remark as *pater familias* would make to a suitor of his daughter's hand! Could it be possible that complacency was so far practised in this remarkable world, that when a gentleman discovers that his spouse's statue is being adored, he wishes the worshipper joy and success? No, this was certainly out of the question, for amiability to such an extent would cease to be a virtue; but what could such a speech mean—what translation did such advice bear? The Prince evidently enjoyed my embarrassment, and exclaimed:

"Now you are so completely betrayed, Heliophilus, let us examine your copy of the original; and do not think I am in any way

displeased with the honour you have done me in the homage paid to this exquisite statue, which, indeed, is life itself."

With this, without more ado, he entered my alcove, and proceeded leisurely to examine every portion of the figure.

The state of my own feelings can never be adequately imparted. Every instant I expected the storm would burst, and that the quiet manner of the Prince was but the prelude; but there was no anger playing in hypocritical smiles about his mouth, and he continued to regard the figure just as any connoisseur of art would regard an exquisite *chef-d'œuvre*. At length—and to me an age seemed in the interval—he merely exclaimed, "Saidiph deserves immortality—the statue is life itself; and he has caught even the most fleeting expressions of the Princess's features." With this, he very quietly withdrew from the recess, and replacing the tell-tale flowers over its entrance, took me by the arm, and in his usual sweet tones continued: "I am loth to tear you from your

home, even for a short while, now I perceive how great is the attractive force which detains you; but I am anxious for you to see some of our manufactories, so I propose a visit at once to our aërial looms."

Thereupon he led me to the carriage in waiting, and I, only too glad to escape from the spot, seated myself by his royal side, when immediately we arose in the air. A few gentle gyrations caused us to ascend spirally higher and higher, and when at a sufficient altitude, we took a path parallel to the Sun's surface. Proceeding in this wise, we soon reached a spot where a large city lay at our feet, arising from which, and piercing the very clouds, were enormously high towers. Drawing up to the summit of one of these buildings, I remarked with delight how beautifully the machinery of our carriage permitted a stationary position in ether, on the same principle that an eagle can poise himself fixed in the air. We now alighted on a parapet running around the top of this pinnacle—but I have no sort of in-

tention of entering into any minute details of this Manchester of the Sun, more especially as I believe no language, saving that spoken by the people, would convey an idea of its extraordinary character.

The tower on which we now found ourselves was used for the purpose of weaving every description of fabric made from the clouds floating past in the high heavens. The great art consisted in arresting the vaporous condensations at their greatest point of attenuation. Thus the cirrus,[1] the finest of all clouds, formed the woof of a commodity, and the cumulus the warp. Or perhaps the stratus or cirro-stratus,[2] in some combination with the cirro-cumulus, would be used

[1] The cirrus cloud has been compared to dry flax, and the cirro-stratus to flax drenched in water! Curiously enough, in meteorological parlance the cirrus is described in language which would suit the manufacturers in the Sun: "Parallel threads cross one another horizontally, and occasionally other strata of the same crossing the first at right or oblique angles, *until a delicate transparent veil is formed.*"

[2] This cloud is the sort which often seems to cut the disc of the Sun or Moon with a dark line, of which Martin, in his pictures, has often made such grand use, and of which Virgil speaks in the Georgics (lib. i.).

for some other material. Then, again, from the cumulus was made, by picking it as we pick oakum, a sort of eider-down so extremely fine that a bushel of it could have been compressed into a hazel-nut. Since this cloud is the sure precursor of rain, I presume that the fine fibres collected from it were ultimately spun into a sort of watered silk—but upon this point, so important to the ladies, I cannot speak authoritatively.

As soon as the aërial machinery had arrested on their various points a sufficient quantity of the nebular fibres, they were sorted according to their degrees of fineness, and then placed in chambers, into which were admitted the particular colour or colours of light which it was intended they should absorb.[1] In due time the gossamer-like threads became properly permeated with the desired tint, and being wound on large cylinders they were ready for the loom.

[1] It has been attempted, but without success, to produce entirely blue dahlias by means of confining them while growing in blue glass-frames, so that the blue ray alone should enter.

We had now descended from our elevation, and proceeded to examine leisurely all the wonders in this city called Ergopolis; and amongst other matters, I was greatly interested by a peculiar chemical preparation which had the effect of making, by its contact, all things assume permanently that which *they really were*. As nitric acid is a test of gold, so this elixir was a test of all material things. The Prince explained to me its modus operandi, and I can only say its application in terrene affairs would have produced a social revolution. Supposing for a single instant — a thing, I acknowledge, scarcely within the bounds of possibility — that a silk-mercer in London sold you, as an article entirely composed of silk, that which contained a goodly amount of cotton, when purchasing you would only require to sprinkle a few drops of this compound on the suspected fabric, and immediately its cotton portion would become manifest, were it never so well gummed and cunningly interwoven with the silk threads. The same with all other matters.

A single drop poured into your armontillado would possibly show that its "dry, nutty flavour" was owing more to the laboratory of the chemist than to the presses in the vineyards; and a "fine crusty port" would be probably resolved into a compound of "damson wine, brandy, cyder, elder wine, salts of copper, and oil of bitter almonds."[1] Just imagine the delight of our metropolitan tradesmen in general, if the secret of the elixir of the Sun were but whispered upon Earth!

Then there was another compound, the nature of which the Prince explained, quite opposite in its effects to the other, for this liquid talisman rendered, by its touch, all things *as they seemed*. If the results of the other test would astonish the material world, will the reader be good enough to conceive the effects of this latter magic potion if brought to bear upon the moral part of human affairs! The heir, simulating tears at

[1] The ingenuity of the wine-makers goes so far as to soak the ends of the corks into a decoction of Brazil-wood and alum, to paint them with the appearance of age.—See "Memoirs of a Stomach," page 113.

the death of his rich relative, obliged to weep in reality! The sycophant, laughing at his patron's dreary jokes, compelled absolutely to be convulsed with risibility! The suitor of the hideous but rich widow Pekoe, obliged to act up to his pretensions and adore truly! The Ghost in "The Corsican Brothers," a veritable thing of air, returning to his home in the capacity of phantom, and when next essaying the part of Hamlet—still necessarily the Ghost! Harlequin, with a real skin of spangles! Clown, a veritable police-defying thief! Columbine, a young lady who positively pirouettes to her husband; and, more wonderful than all, the "walking gentleman" of the Globe Theatre, positively a gentleman!

After the Prince had explained the peculiarities of these and other wonderful compounds, another curious process was exhibited, by means of which the various colours of the spectrum were separated one from the other, rendered solid, and then, when necessary, reduced by trituration to

powder as fine as the down on a butterfly's wing.[1] Next we proceeded to witness the manufacture of that exquisitely beautiful material, minica, which the reader is aware was an article of such extensive application in the city of the Sun, as much for adornment as for use. The method of making it was far more simple than might be supposed. Various chambers of different forms were so fashioned, that by means of hydraulic pressure their sides contracted, and compressing the air in their enormously strong embrace, caused it, at a certain point of force, to become concrete[2]—a solid mass of a crystalline-like substance harder than adamant, and sparkling with inconceivable

[1] If a soap-bubble—one blown from a solution of sugar of soap—is formed near a good fire which causes the aqueous part to evaporate, the bubble will become solid, and burst, falling at once in fragments of different colours.

[2] In the Philosophical Transactions for 1826 there is an account of experiments on the compression of water, which was found, under the influence of a force equal to 2000 atmospheres, diminished by $\frac{1}{72}$ part. The compressibility and elasticity of the atmosphere is exemplified by the air-gun, and numerous other familiar articles of use; but it has been proved by experiment that no amount of pressure is sufficient to destroy the particles of the compressed fluid.

brilliancy. When it was necessary to form blocks of any particular colour, the same process was adopted, only the air compressed in the moulds was previously imbued with the desired tint by a process at once delicate and difficult. Occasionally, owing to some defect in the construction of the machine, the compressed air would overcome the force employed to solidify it, and the explosion was terrific. Its débris being cast far into space, and getting beyond the Sun's attraction, would occasionally become scattered on other worlds, which is the true cause of the falling of those foreign bodies termed by us aërolites and meteoric stones.[1] Some of the blocks, permeated with the Sun's inward beams, were similar to enormous masses of the yellow topaz, united to the hardness of the diamond. Others, again, saturated with the rays of a planet which gave a soft, mellow light like that of our moon, might be compared to cubes of the most delicate opal—

[1] The meteorolites which reach the earth are all found to be composed of nickel, iron, silica, and magnesia. The hypotheses respecting the cause of their appearance are far too numerous for quotation.

indeed, there appeared no limit to the forms and colours which this beautiful minica was made to assume.

The entire day was thus consumed in investigating the wonders of this vast city of industry, a proper description of which would fill volumes.

During our peregrinations we had imbibed a little lunch of delicate perfumes; but as the day wore on, I must confess the thought of some of the dainty odours which were sure to grace the table of Helionax caused a considerable longing for the hour of dinner to approach; and this agreeable anticipation compensated for the fact that our "sight-seeing" had at length come to an end. The extraordinary works I had seen, impressed me with a feeling of almost lassitude—the result of extreme mental tension—but this was dispelled as our aërial carriages cleaved the air, describing an arc of enormous span homeward to Heliopolis. But never shall I forget the city of Labour, where Hérakles[1] worked with such magician

[1] The Greek Hercules.

skill, and where his queen, Aphrodite,[1] taught the uncouth masses to assume harmony and grace, and transformed, with the touch of her dainty finger, the mere useful, into forms of imperishable beauty.

Our atmospheric journey being ended, we alighted at once in the court of the Palace of Heliopolis; and as it still wanted some little time to the hour of our repast, I asked permission to stroll in the royal gardens.

It may easily be conceived, after the description I have elsewhere given of the beauties of Flora and her children in this kingdom,[2] that in the grounds belonging to the "first personage in the land" were collected the rarest and most lovely specimens of these "smiles of the soil." Indeed, I was so ravished with their bewitching forms, that hunger and fatigue were alike forgotten. Had it not been for a certain feeling of trepidation at having so soon to be again ushered into the presence of the Princess, I

[1] The word is here used simply as the impersonation of Beauty.

[2] On Earth about 80,000 different kinds of plants are known.

verily believe the whole external world would have been forgotten.

I was, however, roused from a feeling of delicious intoxication stealing over my senses, by observing a form—too well remembered —too joyfully recognised—stooping to watch the flutterings of a so-called "shadow-bird," which had been caught in a cage-like flower. I need scarcely say this vision of beauty was the Princess Heliotrope; and her musical voice vibrating on the perfumed air, made my heart bound with ecstasy.

On observing me, a blush rose to her cheek as she exclaimed: "I hold a pretty little creature captive, and am uncertain whether to keep it encaged or to give it liberty;—will the wanderer from Earth aid me with his advice?"

At these words I advanced, and for the first time found myself *alone* in the presence of the Princess. I had become so accustomed to worship the inanimate likeness of this beautiful being, that I am sure my looks must have expressed the normal condition of my

adoration, and for some minutes I was utterly unable to respond to her question. At length, with words trembling with emotion, I replied: "The wanderer from Earth cannot conceive a captive in such near proximity to a gracious Princess seeking for liberty!"

"Indeed," she answered, "the prisoner is fluttering his wings with a most decided effort to be free. He is caught in the meshes of the flower, owing to his undue love of sweets;—have you any plants similar to this on Earth?"

This question referred to a most curious and beautiful flower, in form resembling one of those rustic cages which cottagers hang outside their door, the wires being composed of delicate fibres interlacing one another. On one side was a small sac turning inward, which, permitting ingress, precluded the possibility of escape when some too curious or too greedy rover had entered. Its colour was of the purest white, and from its centre or floor oozed a delicate odour, scenting all the air around; and the whole was suspended

from a stalk in such a manner that the slightest motion of any live occupant caused it to swing to and fro. At the present moment an exquisite little bird, closely resembling those glossy shining glass ones we see in bazaars as specimens of glass-blowing, was entrapped, and though endeavouring to gain his liberty, was singing with all the power of his tiny glottis.

To the question whether the botany of the Earth boasts a similar plant, I of course answered in the negative, explaining, however, that we occasionally confine our singing-birds in pretty little prisons, and that even in captivity they warble a hymn to external nature.

"Ah," replied the Princess, bending her lovely head over the flower, "the habits of different worlds are, after all, somewhat similar;—but do you know *why* this bird has become encaged?"

"I can partly guess," said I. "The sweet odour in the centre of the flower attracted the bird, and, entering to partake of a stolen

feast, he has paid the penalty of his temerity and greediness."

"Greediness! Why, for all we know, the poor little thing was in search of food to carry home to his relatives and friends."

"Then is Nature to blame, dear lady."

"How mean you?"

"In due submission," said I, rejoiced to find excuse for a little discussion on the matter, "can there be justice in alluring the bird into bondage, while the impulse that made him captive was implanted by nature?"

"Would it not have been worse if selfishness or gluttony had produced the catastrophe? Is it not better that a so-called evil should rise from an effort of good, than that it should grow out of evil?"

I was somewhat puzzled at this question, and as I had no desire to plunge into the depths of metaphysics, but only to carry on a little playful argument on the surface of things, I avoided the question, and replied:

"At least, do you intend to take compassion on the bird and let him out?"

"First answer me this—like an oracle you have explained why the bird is here—now tell me why the flower has caught him?"

"Indeed I cannot."

"Then why do you first accuse the captive of being greedy, and next condemn Nature for leading him into temptation?"

There was a degree of slight badinage in the tone of the Princess which, while it imparted piquancy to our conversation, put me upon my metal.

"Because," said I, "whatever the reason of the captivity—captive the bird surely is, and Nature has evidently worked in her most delicate and subtle manner to produce such a floral-prison—literally a prison—yet the captive therein confined is innocent! Can this be just?"

"Do you think the bird will be happier when he recovers his liberty than he was before he became a prisoner?"

"Unquestionably; for reaction to despondency results in delight."

"Very well, then. Now mark the result;

but first answer me my former question: why has the flower caught him? See how he flutters and sings!"

Upon the reiteration of this query I bent over the flower and narrowly examined it, but there was nothing within or without to enable me to respond satisfactorily to the interrogation; so I was fain compelled again to confess my inability to even guess the reason.

"Well, then," said she, "this plant entraps birds of song because it lives and thrives solely upon music."

"Music!" I rejoined, greatly surprised; "then that is the reason why the Princess condescends to bend over its petals and to converse in its presence."

At this my lovely companion blushed, and her manner for a moment changed; but quickly resuming her tone of quiet banter—a tone impossible to describe, for it was a mixture of playfulness and enthusiasm—she continued:

"Yes, music is necessary to the life of this

plant—that is, music in the form of a singing-bird's notes, and, loving more especially the particular sort of song which our captive here gives forth, the complicated arrangement you witness is the result—manifestly for the flower's benefit, is it not?"

"Certainly, Princess — for the *flower's* good; but I am astonished at the plant's predilection for sweet sounds."

"Ah," said she, archly, "if you meet my statement of a fact by simple astonishment, how am I to vindicate Nature from your belief in her injustice?"

I perceived at once by this reply that the little froth of flattery I had hoped to serve up with effect was utterly useless; moreover, I felt assured that by continuing a frivolity of manner I should gradually succumb to an intellect which I had every desire to meet at least on equal grounds. In tones more serious, therefore, I replied:

"Gracious lady, can you wonder when I express surprise at a phenomenon so strange as a flower's living upon melody?"

"Why should you wonder?"

"The flower cannot hear."

"No; but the vibrations of air caused by the bird's song act upon the plant's delicate organisation in such a way that its fibres respond to the soft contact, and are thereby stimulated to grow and thrive."

"Then without the aid of songsters the flower would fade?"

"Just so. After all, you see, there is no such very great room for surprise."

"But I do not yet perceive, dear lady, how Nature can be acquitted of injustice, for her favours, at present, seem all to be on the side of the plant."

"How so?" she asked. "The bird has enjoyed a delicious feast."

"And pays the penalty by being held in bondage."

"Hark, how he sings! Were he miserable, would he utter such notes?"

This question rather puzzled me, for the little fellow was piping away in the most joyful manner.

"Ah," I said, "he is not conscious of his imprisonment."

"Yes; because see how he attempts to set himself free."

"Then what is the mystery?"

"Look again and you will know."

At this I observed a bird of a similar nature to the one encaged fluttering near the flower, and though she evidently regarded it wistfully, she took up the notes of her mate and performed a duetto in a very sprightly and agreeable manner. The soul of Blondel might have reposed in that feathered body; and for all I knew, she might, in her own language, have been singing "Oh, Richard—oh, mon roi." When she had sufficiently disported herself—and when, moreover, she had fully raised the expectation of her liege lord, off she flew, pretending to abandon him, but soon returned, flirting, and singing, and fluttering. Satisfied with her little arts, she hopped down, and opened the valve in the flower-prison, by pushing it with her golden

beak. Out hopped the captive, rejoicing in his freedom; and winging his way with his beloved liberator, trilled forth a charming song of praise to liberty, no doubt very much happier from his temporary incarceration, and for the tender solicitude of his lady-love.

"Ah," exclaimed I, charmed with the scene—"I assure you, dear Princess, that on Earth it is not every wife that would have been so kind!"

"Have not all parties gained by this little episode?" she asked. "The flower has enjoyed a feast of song, the bird a feast of odour. His mate, the delight of becoming the means of his deliverance—pre-known to him—therefore his song; and Nature vindicates herself from your aspersions by showing an exquisite ingenuity in imparting delight growing out of necessity; while a certain Princess and a traveller from a distant star have occupied a few minutes of their time by no means disagreeable to either."

It is impossible to convey an idea of the naïveté and grace with which this speech was uttered.

The nature of the topic might suggest a grave, blue-stockingish sort of manner, but, on the contrary, she treated the subject with a most fascinating playfulness, and the radiant light of her laughing and happy features, all contributed to rivet the chains I felt drawing closer and closer around my heart.

"Oh, lovely Princess!" I exclaimed, "Nature, with such a High-Priestess as yourself to translate all that she would teach, into language of love and perfection, would make her afford to scatter riches and beauty around, for a delighted and affluent mood must result from such divine advocacy."

"Do you copy your extravagance of compliment from any undue redundancy to be found in Nature's works?" she quietly demanded; and before I could reply, asked me if there was nothing—positively nothing, amongst the flowers of Earth which resembled these cage-plants?

I bethought me for an instant, and answered:

"We certainly have a plant which entraps insects;[1] but their fate, unlike that of the bird which has just escaped, is to perish."

"For which, I suppose, you would reproach Nature as being unjust?"

"Well, it certainly would seem so."

"Of what duration is the life of the insects?"

"Oh, an ephemeral one—perhaps a few hours."

"Does that appear an age to their limited faculties and low organism?"

"I imagine so—quite an æon."

"And the period of their death a mere point or dot of time?"

"Assuredly."

"Then Nature gives them comparatively a century of delight, and an inconceivably

[1] A species of sensitive plant, the Dionæa Muscipula, or Venus's Fly-trap.

instantaneous moment of anguish—is this unjust?"

"Most gracious lady," I exclaimed, "your mode of opening this little philosophic campaign is scarcely fair. Your playful manner suggests the use of light artillery, and you forthwith open a battery of heavy guns!"

"You mean to say," said she, laughing, "that I cause you to dive where you desire to swim; but are the treasures of the deep ever found on the surface?"

"But there all the sunshine plays."

"Not with us; our sunshine issues from caverns below us. Deep, deep at our feet is the heat by which you make sweet hay in your meadows—95,000,000 of miles distant!"

"Why, after all," I replied, "the worlds through space are united by the closest ties."

"Cousins all"—and then, with a sly glance, she added, "only some of them are very diminutive in size."

"On behalf of my planet I challenge you to pay it a visit, and judge whether a little world may not be a good one."

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, laughing, "what a long journey through space! Besides, the Prince cannot leave his kingdom even for a trip so delightful."

The word "Prince" reminded me of the fact that every moment of my conversation with this fascinating being not only involved me in danger, but dishonour; for I felt that my deference of manner was only equalled by a tone of deep devotion, which was utterly impossible for me to repress. A thousand conflicting emotions took possession of my breast; and as at that moment the Princess bent downward to pluck a flower growing near, the light pouring upward from its eternal fountains below fell on her divine features, producing an effect as though she were about to rise and vanish into air. A phantom-wreath of white lilies had taken the place of the ordinary halo

which encircled her brow, not resting in positive contact, but quivering about, as if an unseen hand had plucked the flowers from some world of spirits and placed them in that heaven of bliss, half invisible, half seen.

Never did it fall to the lot of man to witness such divinity, and, assuredly, never was it his fate to enjoy an unconstrained converse with one so perfect in feature and in mind. Still the word "Prince" partially disenchanted me, and brought the reality of my position strongly before me; and in saddened tones I exclaimed:

"Would that the Prince were less my friend, or the Princess less angelic—would that the adoration of a goddess were not sin against a god!"

My companion, at this, looked up with an expression of extreme surprise—a surprise resting for a moment on her features like a little cloud on the bright sky of a summer's day—and for an instant she regarded me with a glance which seemed to read my

inmost soul; but this, almost as rapidly as it came, subsided into a look of compassion, and, without even alluding to my sudden ejaculation, said:

"How does Heliophilus wing the hours in the seclusion of his own home, now he has settled down into a naturalised Helionite?"

"By idolatry."

"What is the idol?"

"Adamant."[1]

"In whose likeness?"

"A lady's."

"A delicate mode of informing me you believe our sex stony!"

"No, indeed, gracious lady, it is a simple fact. My whole time is occupied in worshipping an inanimate statue, which, if a glowing fervor could produce life, would descend from its pedestal a living and breathing form of beauty."

A deep blush suffused her cheeks as she exclaimed:

[1] The word in the original, signifying a hard, fine, adamantine substance, of which the statue was made, is impossible to translate.

"A strange mode of dissipating your leisure time."

"A delicious one; for since I may not aspire to the worship of the living original, I take refuge in adoring the copy."

"Who is the artist?"

"Saidiph; well known in Heliopolis, is he not?"

At mention of this name, the Princess evinced an emotion which she had evidently some difficulty in subduing, and at length, in a subdued voice, she replied:

"Oh, yes; he is one of our most renowned Sculptors. Some of his figures are so perfect and so closely resemble nature that a partial existence become theirs, and a sort of inanimate life is imparted to them."

A ray of hope shot through my mind like an electric spark at this strange disclosure, and I exclaimed:

"Do such miracles exist in the world of art?"

"Yes, it is permitted by certain laws, which the Prince will explain if you are

curious on the subject, that the moment a sculptor arrives at such perfection that the external form is an exact reflex of the original, the fountains of real life commence and go on accumulating to a certain point; so that, should your statue one of these days exhibit symptoms of animation do not feel surprised, but attribute it to the artist's skill, and to Nature's method of corroborating it."

So many conflicting feelings arose at this speech, that I knew not what would have been the result, had not, at that moment, several attendants approached and informed me that it was time to prepare for dinner; or, in less colloquial terms, that the banquet of odours would soon be served. When I turned to ask permission to accompany my fair and august companion through the garden, I found she had vanished, and I fancied I caught sight of the flutter of her cloud-mantle through an aperture in a screen of amber shrubs. I had, therefore, nothing left but to relinquish myself into the custody

of the servants, who escorted me to the ever delicious bath. My simple toilet was soon completed, and for the second time I found myself a guest at the Prince's table; but, unlike the former festival, the present party was a large and somewhat grand one, chiefly composed of what we term "men of the day," who, as they usually get a substantial equivalent for their ideas, are generally taciturn or curt at social meetings. This, however, was not the case here; yet I neither enjoyed the conversation nor feasted on the delicious viands, but relinquished myself to a retrospect of the past hour, in vain endeavouring to disentangle the complex nature of the conversation, and to separate those portions which had flattered or wounded my self-love. In short, I experienced that dissatisfied sensation that every one has felt after a long discussion with an adored object, and I thought of the very appropriate responses I ought to have made, and of the vast amount of wit and wisdom I might have exhibited, but which I certainly had not. The retrospect

furnished the conviction that a mixture of delicate satire lurked in much that the Princess had uttered; and more especially I am fain to believe that she could not possibly be in earnest respecting the miraculous power possessed by the artists of the Sun; and then naturally my thoughts reverted to the discovery of my secret by the Prince in his "flying visit" to my garden in the morning, and I lingered over the recollection of the strange fact, that the disclosure had only the effect of eliciting his good wishes for the future! After such a betrayal, too, of my feelings, he had been my companion during the day, and my hospitable entertainer in the evening. Everything around me was a mystery, but this exceeded all, and I took an opportunity, during the discussion of some abstruse topic, to make my escape from the palace, resolving, with a certain reservation, that I would consult Alûtedon upon the delicate and difficult position in which I found myself.

On my return home, fortunately my good

friend was there waiting for me; so, after recounting the day's adventures, I opened the subject nearest to my heart, and the following was the dialogue on this knotty point:

Heliophilus (somewhat abruptly)—How is inconstancy and all its train of evil punished in the Sun?

Alûtedon—Not at all.

Heliophilus—How very strange!

Alûtedon—Can that be punished which never exists?

Heliophilus (with a qualm of conscience)—Do you mean to say that virtue reigns so supreme here that ladies are entirely removed from the danger of being loved by those who have no right to do so?

Alûtedon—Exactly. There is no retrogression in love.

Heliophilus—But is marriage never contracted without love?

Alûtedon—Never; for, as I before explained, none here are permitted to marry unless their mutual attachment is clearly

manifested by the increase of their personal beauty.[1]

Heliophilus—And it never decreases?

Alûtedon—Never; with the termination of love and beauty the body becomes sweet dust—the property of the winds.

Heliophilus—But, Alûtedon, to put a suppositious case—utterly out of the pale of probability (here an easy sensation, as if the "pomum adami" had slipped into the digestive organs, overtook me)—imagine, for instance, that I, a humble wayfarer in your beautiful orb, forgetful of all the ties of honour and virtue, were to permit the force of my admiration for female loveliness to overwhelm my judgment, and that I perpetrated the madness, and folly, and wickedness of falling in love with—with the divine Heliotrope?

Alûtedon—So much the worse for Heliophilus; for the passion would be necessarily unrequited, and your love misspent.

Heliophilus—But, Alûtedon, to continue

[1] *Vide* page 154.

the ridiculous supposition (here the lump returned into my unhappy throat), imagine that I dared to express by every symptom so well known to lovers the nature of my regard; and suppose, furthermore, that instead of her resenting the indignity, she only made herself more fascinating still, and assumed a thousand little additional graces of manner and actions which had lain dormant until she perceived my heart was irretrievably gone;—what translation would this have?

Atûtedon—That her conduct was without principle, and that, therefore, she dwells not in Heliopolis.

Heliophilus (without heeding these last words)—Suppose further, Alûtedon, that I (here I nearly came to a stand-still) wore a miniature of the Princess next to my heart, and that during some mid-day slumber the Prince, her husband, perceived the likeness and its position; and that, instead of exhibiting anger at the discovery, he

merely wishes the sleeper prosperity and devotion! How would you answer this?

Alûtedon (a sudden beam of light stealing over his handsome features, and after a short pause)—I should feel simply overwhelmed with surprise, and imagine that I was rather in the land of dreams than of reality.

This was by no means a satisfactory reply of my good friend Alûtedon, for my cross-questioning had only elicited the fact that under such strange circumstances he would feel exactly as I felt. Than this, nothing could be more unsatisfactory, and I was completely at a loss as to the best method of throwing any light upon the subject without a positive and direct confession. I considered for some minutes, and then resolved that on the morrow I would exhibit my statue, confess the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and cast myself upon the kindness of his nature and the strength of his friendship for counsel and compassion. At

least, thought I, in a land where all is nobleness, refinement, and goodness, I will make one desperate attempt to preserve myself from becoming an exception to the laws of virtue; and though my heart is torn piecemeal in the struggle the effort *shall* be made.

With this determination I soon managed to change the topic; and as Alûtedon was not long before he departed, I offered up such prayers for strength and aid in my resolution as had not risen from my oppressed soul for many a long day; and directly the sounds of melody were unloosed by contact with my couch, an unusually beautiful hymn swelled gently through my abode, seeming to fill the very atmosphere with a religious serenity, to the tones of which I sank into sleep, placid and happy as a child.

Before long, however, I awoke from my slumber, and not being able to resume an intimate acquaintance with repose, I arose and sought the refreshing air of the garden, determined to prove faithful to my newly-

formed resolution, and avoid the alcove of my beautiful statue.

All within and around these enchanting gardens blended mysticism with exquisite reality, and as the night air sighed through the hundred plants which gleamed with illuminated petals, I could have fancied myself in Flora's own home, wherein high revelry was being held to celebrate the birthnight of some favourite offspring of the sweet goddess. Anon little eddies of air would twist some of the smaller tribe of luminous flower-buds on their stems, forming by their rapid revolution tiny circles of lustre; and occasionally a luminous sort of blue-bell, growing on a tall tree, would drop to the ground, appearing like a falling star on a small scale!

Sleep in such goodly company was glad to resume his sway over my senses, and I lay down on a bank carpeted with flowers. A thousand grotesque forms gathered around me, and above, all the blue tapestry of Heaven was embroidered with stars in pat-

terns formed in the looms of eternity; while the pale eye of the planet Earth seemed to watch over me with a pensive and almost sad gaze. Slumber's delicious anodyne again fell on my wearied lids, and I slept—slept for *the last time*—in the kingdom of Helionax.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST.

THE MISSING STATUE—FLOWER-PRISON—SUBHELION-PATH—COURT OF CONSCIENCE—SPEECHES THEREIN—TEMPTATION—THE CHOICE—DUPLICATE GARDEN—STATUE OF LIFE—SATIRIC-LOVE—MELTING STONE—ERROR—EXPLANATION—HELIONIC-HADES—FEARFUL PUNISHMENT—HELIOSWEET—BIRD-SLAVES—ANGER—THOUGHTS OF EARTH—CHRISTABEL—ETERNITY OF LOVE—SPIRIT NATURE—MARRIED YET SINGLE—CONTRADICTIONS—SPIRIT INVITATION—REFUSAL THEREOF—NUPTIALS—SAPPHIRE PATH—MYSTERY—WIFE-CRITIC—TEARS—JOY—CONCLUSION.

As the morning sun evaporates the dews of the previous night, I fear it oftentimes dries up the tears of repentance, and unstrings the tension of good resolution—at least, those resolves relating to our conduct towards the fairer portion of the community Health and the morning air bracing up the nerves and fibres of the body ought to

strengthen the mind as well; but, at the same time, they induce temptations to assume a stronger power of captivating owing to the increase of physical enjoyment.

At least it was thus with me. When I arose in the morning, after fully determining to abandon the worship of my beautiful idol, I grieve to confess I felt more than ever disposed to begin the day by worshipping at her shrine, and I found myself plucking flowers to grace the pedestal on which the beloved image rested, while this little act of weakness was soon followed by a flood of enthusiasm overwhelming my soul, the more impetuous from the embargo I had resolved to lay upon my feelings. The idea of a fresh glance at those heavenly features caused the feeling to rush like an impetuous torrent over my senses, and in the fancied spray thereof imagination hovered in brilliant colours of hope and memory. Every word of the preceding day's conversation was recalled, and I endeavoured to remember each accompanying tone and gesture, so that I might construe them with all possible ingenuity for my own

advantage. I believe, too, the candid reader will not refuse his evidence in the case to the effect that I certainly did possess some right to encourage hope from the nature of our dialogue in the garden of the palace, for at least the Princess was no indignant repellent of my earnest praises and eloquent looks, nor was there an attempt on her part to render nugatory the electric force which darts from the battery of unbounded admiration, and which is so eloquent of the heart within, without a syllable being uttered. In fact, the young lady, to borrow a phrase from the vernacular in the match markets of Earth, had indirectly "given me encouragement," and encouragement, however slight, when coming from the most beautiful and the most exalted lady in that sphere which illuminated thousands of worlds, was assuredly no ordinary cause for an intoxication of spirits. It was, however, not in the natural course of things that this state of mental ecstasy could last, and every human being who on Earth has for the first

time strayed over the Iris-bridge of love into new regions lit by the starry eyes of hope, will remember how often deep depression has succeeded to excess of rapture, and how sudden oftentimes is the fall from the high heaven of faith into the abyss of doubt and despair!

At all events, whether it be so or not in the planet Earth, it was my fate to experience in the Sun all the various shades of love, faith, hope, belief, certain belief, ecstasy, super-ecstasy, and utter intoxication; then I rapidly slid down the graduated scale extending from zenith to nadir, into partial sobriety, bewilderment, complete soberness, doubt, certainty of doubt, helplessness, misery, and despair. Indeed, all the conflicting emotions which usually sweep over a lover's heart passed in excess over mine, and I have no doubt the torrent drowned in its course that quality of the mind called judgment—for the natural and simple idea that there might be some mistake in the whole affair never once suggested itself. In-

deed, had any question of the sort been started by the more watchful faculties of the brain, no doubt I should have replied by exclaiming "Mistake! did I not dine with the royal ladies? Have my senses so utterly forsaken me that I could ever forget the matchless beauty of Heliotrope, having but once gazed on her inimitable features?" Indeed, what possible error *could* there be? and as the possibility never occurred of any delusion in the matter, I continued in that state of dreamy bliss which the hatchis-eater alone is said to experience.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to observe, that I naturally reverted to the extraordinary statement of the Princess, that excellence in sculpture produced a form of partial existence to the figure sculptured; and again and again I endeavoured to call to mind every expression of her features, and every tone of her voice, so as to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion as to whether there was not a latent satire in this statement.

According to the natural laws existing even

in this curious world, the thing was not to be explained by ordinary causes, so I resolved to question Saidiph upon the subject. With this object I started off to the city, and found my kind friend busy in his studio. I made my excuses for interrupting him, but he assured me he should proceed in his work as though I were not present, and that he should enjoy a little chat while he moulded the plastic material into forms of beauty.

"Saidiph," I said, "which of all your statues do you consider most life-like?"

"That of the Princess," he replied, going on with his work.

"The one with which you so generously presented me?"

"Yes; do you not think it like?"

"Life itself."

"Why did you ask the question?"

"The truth is," said I, "dining at the palace last evening, I heard an assertion made so remarkable that I could scarcely credit my senses."

"Very likely not," said he, "because they are limited."

"I heard it affirmed," quoth I, "and seriously affirmed, that by some astounding means, inanimate figures, when created by gentlemen of your profession with consummate skill, became animate with life, at least with life to limited powers of perception. A statement so startling requires corroboration from the fountain-head of artistic skill, so I have come to you to propound the question."

Saidiph continued his occupation, and replied, "We have some few legends amongst our chronicles ages ago of such miracles being performed, but we regard them as mere traditionary tales, without containing a particle of truth."

"I thought as much," I said, in a tone of disappointment.

"Not so fast," replied he; "we are very apt to place bygone wonders to the account of phenomena, and treat the miracles of the day as matters of course."

"Then, *can* you produce even a semi-existence?" said I, anxiously.

"No; but copy it to such perfection that it is almost impossible to tell where nature begins and art ends."

"But breath, for example—you cannot imitate the rise and fall of the bosom, arising from respiration?"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"Regard your statue when you return home, and judge for yourself."

After this speech, Saidiph continued his work, and in vain I endeavoured to elicit something more satisfactory from him on the subject. As far as replying to my questions went, he exhibited the converse of stone becoming life, by life becoming stone. If I gained a reply at all, it was a mere monosyllable; so I thought it better to leave him to his mouldings, and hasten home to test whether the effect he mentioned *could* exist in a statue.

The sensations of the Cypriot sculptor, when presenting himself before the simulacre of the divinity he adored, earnestly beseech-

ing the gods that the breath of life might expand the cold bosom of his beloved image, were, I conceive, somewhat similar to those I experienced on my way home, when contemplating the possibility of Saidiph's statement proving true.[1]

With a nervous fluttering at the heart I approached my domicile, and with almost a certain presentiment that something out of the ordinary course of things was about to occur, I entered my garden, and approached the shrine of my adored image. The air was hushed, and not a breath disturbed the clusters of flowers; and the graceful foliage of rare and beautiful clinging plants, with which I curtained the entrance to the alcove, hung down and entirely concealed the interior of

[1] "Pleased with his idol, he commends, admires,
Adores; and last the thing adored, desires.
A very virgin in her face was seen;
And had she moved, a living maid had been:
One would have thought she could have stirred, but strove
With modesty, and was ashamed to move.
Art vied with art, so well performed the cheat,
It caught the sculptor with his own deceit."

OVID'S *Metamorphoses.*

my home of love. With an unsteady hand I drew aside the floral drapery, and the contrast between expectation and fact was startling beyond words to express.

I have already endeavoured to explain that the alcove or niche in which I had placed the statue was part of a high bank, rising gradually to some height. The back sloped gradually away till it became level with a series of gentle undulations. The dimensions of the recess in English measure would have been about ten or twelve square feet, but the back of the latter came abruptly behind the figure. The walls of the grotto were composed of flowers which had once interlaced one another, but by some means had now become solid, and formed grotesque[1]

[1] Grotesque is a term often used in a mistaken sense. The Lombards, in the time of the old masters, were famous for their wreaths as applied to decorative art; but the Romans and Tuscans were the most skilful in a variety of beautiful designs, consisting of festoons and flowers, and amongst them winding stems, birds, and animals were inserted with great elegance and ingenuity. Many of the best foliages were copied from plants found in grottos, from thence the name *grotesque;* but Benvenuto Cellini denounces the term as follows: "This is not their proper name, for as the ancients

or arabesque designs of every possible colour and form. The statue itself stood on a pedestal of achromatic minica, and I had so arranged the elytron or turf, which so subdued the light shining upward, that a mellowed lustre surrounded the whole figure, and bathed it in just sufficient light to exhibit its exquisite proportions in all their beauty.

This description is necessary to enable the reader to understand the change which was wrought in the interior of my grotto, when with palpitating heart and trembling hand I lifted its leafy curtain, expecting to see the glow of life tinting the form of my life-awakened idol. Judge, therefore, of my dismay when, upon lifting the pendant flower-screen, I was almost dazzled with the exceeding brilliancy which burst from the interior of the cave; but light alone filled it, for my statue—my beloved image,

delighted in the composition of chimerical creatures, and gave to the supposed promiscuous breed of animals the appellation of monsters, in like manner artists produced by their foliages monsters of this sort; and that is the proper name for them, not grotesques."

was gone!—not a vestige of the figure was there, and the plinth alone stood in its usual position, bereft of the wondrous creation of Saidiph's hand.

As soon as I had recovered from my dismay and astonishment I entered the alcove, and instead of finding myself in a confined chamber, it had become the portal to an illuminated passage leading — the powers knew where!—away from the back of the grotto. Amazed at this strange discovery, I entered a little way into the unexplored path, and as I did so the festoons of flowers, which overhung the entrance of the cave, fell in thick clusters about it, so thick, indeed, that they hid the garden from my view. At the same time I fancied I could detect a soft and plaintive sigh rustling through their leaves, and the sound brought a presentiment to my soul that I should never more rove amid the beauties of that sweet garden of flowers, nor ever again enter the portals of the beautiful abode which the generosity of the Prince

had placed at my disposal. Gradually less and less grew the external light, and brighter by contrast streamed the light within the passage, while cluster upon cluster of dark and thick plants still kept increasing the blockade at the entrance of the grotto. Curious plants, which I had never before noticed, dropped from concealed places in the roof, and intertwining and interlacing, formed a complete barrier to all egress, so that no choice was left but to pursue my way down the illuminated vistas of the pathway, which led — ah! whither would it lead? And I suddenly paused as the thought occurred, that perhaps, through my insane idolatry, I had lost all right to a longer residence amongst the virtuous Helionites, and that the path I now trod would conduct me perhaps to other regions, in perfect contrast to the glorious ones I had forfeited for ever!

With these dreadful surmises oppressing me, I again essayed to make my way back to the garden, but I saw at once the attempt

would be abortive, for a thousand tendrils twining with love of one another, or perhaps of hatred of myself, formed a solid mass, which resisted every effort I made to separate the entanglement. "Ah!" muttered I, "it is even so; the tenderest and most delicate of Nature's works—the very flowers I have so loved—unite in judgment against me, and holding council on my crime, resolve unanimously that their fragile arms shall imprison me, and so prove that the combination of even weak and gentle things have power to endure and strength to punish." Another mournful note sighed through the cavern, and with a feeling of sorrow and depression I reluctantly turned from the grotto and proceeded down the sloping pathway, leading I knew not whither.

Below, at my feet, streamed upward opaque brightness, while the sides and roof of the passage were hard and smooth, sufficiently so indeed as to slightly reflect the rays of light which beamed from the eternal lamps underneath. Here and there were writings on the

wall in characters I was unable to read, and they alternately glowed and grew dim, like the distant glow of a revolving beacon.

The air, unlike the delicious air of my recent retreat, almost sparkling and evanescent with freshness and purity, seemed loaded, and oppressed my breathing, so I concluded I was wending my way deeper and deeper into the subhelion world.

During this time I endeavoured to recal every circumstance that had happened during my sojourn in the Sun, and more especially I tried to recollect every syllable that the Prince had uttered in respect to the punishment of those who committed any infringement of the moral laws of the country, and I naturally came to the conclusion that having been guilty of harbouring in my heart a passion for the Princess, I had incurred the penalty of ostracism, and that at this moment I was fulfilling the decree of destiny, and was on my way to either temporary or eternal banishment.

So assured did I feel of this, that as I

wandered on I began speculating upon the particular part of the Sun it would be my fate to visit, and whether I should be compelled to pass through a period of purification, and if so, what space of time was the ordeal to last.

I had now proceeded some distance, and how long I might have continued this train of thought it is impossible to say, but suddenly the certainty that I had been proceeding down an inclined plane gave place to an assurance equally strong that I was proceeding up one, and since gravitation in the Sun exerts exactly similar laws as in other spheres, I experienced that sort of feeling which makes us slacken our speed when proceeding up hill. In truth, the ascent was more abrupt than pleasant, but I was consoled by the recollection that a rising process must necessarily bring me to the surface of the Sun again, whilst a greater degree of freshness in the air corroborated this agreeable certainty.

In the mean while, I endeavoured to be-

come my own judge in the matter of my delinquencies, and my conscience listened to counsel both for the prosecution and for the defence.

The former opened the case, and explained to the court that, "having received "every kindness that a Prince and a gentle- "man of the Sun could possibly bestow upon "an erratic Earthite, he, the wanderer from "his own sphere, was guilty of the most pal- "pable dereliction of duty in permitting his "admiration of the Princess Heliotrope to "make more than a passing impression on "his heart; or if this self-abnegation in the "case were impossible, by reason of the Prin- "cess's exceeding loveliness and grace, it were "nevertheless utterly unjustifiable for the "aforesaid traveller through space to suborn, "by acts of simulated friendship, the good- "will of a certain sculptor of Heliopolis, "named Saidiph, so that the said sculptor of "Heliopolis did, on a certain day, or days, "conceive, form, make, or manufacture a cer- "tain statue, which in the innocence of his

"heart, and arising out of the generosity
"of his disposition, he presented or made
"over to defendant. And furthermore, the
"said statue being so exceedingly like the
"Princess Heliotrope in every outward cha-
"racter, save and except the softness of
"her skin, that the defendant was enabled
"thereby to so thoroughly cheat his judg-
"ment, and deceive his imagination, that he
"offered up to the inanimate image the in-
"cense of his love; and in thus pouring
"forth the overflowings of an undisciplined
"worship, he, the said defendant, had com-
"mitted a crime against reason, an injury to
"judgment, and an offence against the dignity
"of his sovereign, whose liege lady and well-
"beloved wife the said image was made to
"resemble. Furthermore, the defendant had
"been guilty of making love by implication
"and inuendo to the Princess in person, when
"conversing with that gracious lady in the
"gardens of the palace, and that instead of
"flying from her presence as one who knows
"the danger of temporising, he threw into

" his manner and bearing all that *finesse* of " language so calculated to interest one of " the weaker sex, and to sap the foundations " of fidelity and truth."

This was the brief of Counsellor Self-Accusation; but, on the other side, Serjeant Excuse addressed the court in terms which went to show " that defendant had struggled " manfully against the impression that the " lovely Heliotrope made upon his sensitive " heart, and that so far from his obtaining a " likeness of the lady being a crime, it was a " judicious and virtuous method of distract- " ing his attention from the living object of " his regard. The struggles, too, which he " endured when he discovered the true state " of his feelings, and his virtuous resolution " to confess the whole truth to either his " friend Alûtedon or to the Prince himself, " proved that his notions of honour and in- " tegrity were by no means warped by the " fire of his passion; while the very prayers " which he had offered up that the statue " might become living, was another test that

"he was only anxious to possess the *copy of* "*a sublime work, and* NOT *the original.* "Respecting the dialogue in the gardens of "the palace, the learned serjeant contended "that a tone of deference and respect "breathed in every syllable, and if defend- "ant ventured to manifest his deep admira- "tion by a gesture, look, or indescribable "*empressement* of manner (to which his "learned brother had applied the ridiculous "word finesse), due allowance ought to be "made for a man suddenly placed in a posi- "tion to enjoy an uninterrupted tête-à-tête "with a Princess so lovely, that a coronet of "light had descended from heaven itself to "grace her brow, and to pronounce her "'Queen of all beauty.'"

As the learned gentleman concluded his eloquent address, there was an attempt at applause in the gallery of Self-Extenuation, but it was immediately repressed by the officers of the court.—Mr. Justice Conscience said he should take time to consider the verdict.

These thoughts amused me, and diverted

my mind from the strange nature of my position; nor, indeed, was I scarcely capable of forming judgment on myself, and I waited the development of whatever fate might have in store with a sort of stoical indifference, for I felt that since my adored image had been taken from my possession all hope had passed away; and since life without love would be but a valueless gift, my heart grew colder and colder, and I pursued my way with a feeling of depression impossible to describe.

At this juncture, the pathway I had been traversing diverged into two distinct roads, the entrance to which was closed with wickets, and over these wickets were two superscriptions, which I perceived plainly enough bore a direct allusion to my future destiny. As I continued to gaze, the letters grew brighter and brighter, and showed me that the time had arrived when I was compelled to select between right and wrong, and no longer tamper with conscience, or cheat myself into the belief that inclination lay in the same road as duty.

The words above the first portal, arranged

in a sort of monogrammatic design, were, "LOVE SACRIFICED TO VIRTUE;" and on the other, "VIRTUE SACRIFICED TO LOVE." This then was plain enough. Here were two pathways—the one, I doubted not, leading to all that my fervent hopes could realise; and the other, to the abandonment of the brightest vision which had ever blessed my life.

And now commenced a struggle within myself which I will not attempt to portray. As I continued to gaze on the mystic words they seemed to dilate and brighten, and then to grow smaller and dimmer, nearly vanishing from sight, then lustrous again, and anon fading away as if in disgust or despair at my indecision. In vain I endeavoured to trace some difference in the importance of the two devices, so that I might throw the responsibility of my choice upon some external object, however unimportant per se; but never were two writings so provokingly alike in size, colour, and luminosity. Then I reverted to every gesture of the loved being I adored, and endeavoured, with an

equally vain result, to receive some sort of guide from memory. The natural effect of remembering her loveliness was to make me approach the gate which opened on the road to love, and so nearly had I determined at all hazards to follow the dictates of my passion, that the words "LOVE SACRIFICED TO VIRTUE" became quite pale, while the others glowed with redoubled light. Next, in a torrent of self-condemnation, came the recollection of all the Prince's generosity, his hospitality, his friendship, and the sweet, confiding amenity of his manner, especially towards myself. But even these considerations threatened to be useless in the struggle, for the likeness of that one exquisite form arose before me, and bade all else fly from its bewitching presence—so fatally distinct was the vision that I resolved to follow it, even to perdition. My resolution was taken; and, approaching the portal over which were the alluring words of promise, I was almost in the act of placing my hand on the fragile fastening which closed it; but ere I did so, for one moment

I buried my face in my hands, and muttered a prayer for help in the hour of need, almost wild in its fervency and concentrated force. At the same moment a new idea took possession of my mind, and I remembered how strangely all my life had passed in adoration of the beautiful, not only in the moral world, but in those more common external forms in which Nature binds the volumes of her mysterious laws. Was I then about to sacrifice all my chance of a future induction into the solemnities of her Temples? Was I on the verge of abandoning for *one* glorious form, the myriads which I might one day know away in the trackless fields of the star-studded ether? Was the curtain of the future to fall over the ecstasies of the brief present? and were the delicious accents of brief love to stifle for ever the whispers of the glorious revelation which the soul foreshadows even in her corporeal prison? The thought was maddening; and, scarcely giving myself time for reflection, I pushed violently against the wicket above which beamed in

bright letters those mystic words, "LOVE SACRIFICED TO VIRTUE." As I did so, I entered what I believed would prove a continuation of the passage; but as the portal closed behind me I found myself in a spot which made me believe the whole scene a dream, and myself an unreal person in a world of myth. The back of the door which had just shut, formed, when closed, nothing more nor less than the back of my own grotto, or at least its fac-simile, and there, peeping through an opening facing this, was my own beautiful garden, and the tendrils of the clinging plants were flaunting gaily in the light breeze, nodding and bending as it were to welcome my return! Their sweet arms no longer imprisoned me, but waved to and fro to the air, which was doubtless whispering confidential matters in their ears. There, too, was the pedestal on which my adored statue had reposed, and nothing save the image itself was wanting to complete the exact resemblance of this grotto, to the alcove I had lately left.

But was it the same? Had I traversed a circuitous route, and so arrived at my original starting-point? But then I remembered the diverging paths; and at length I concluded that the spot was a counterpart to the one in which I had become a prisoner.

The grotto itself seemed to me to be rather lower than my own, but in all other respects, even to the polished walls, and the curious designs with which the flowers had helped me to deck it, the interior was identical with the other terminus.

Though surprised beyond measure at this strange similarity, and wondering whether the adjacent grounds partook of the magical likeness, I thought I would first ascertain how far the height of the alcove differed from mine, and for this purpose I stepped on the vacant pedestal. I intended to have performed the very natural action of raising my arm to see how near my hand approached the roof, but no sooner had I planted my feet on the stand than a bewildered feeling overtook me; and when I attempted to move I

found I was incapable of stirring hand or foot, and that I was as firmly transfixed as though I had been a statue hewn out of stone.

How often it happens that at the most tragical moment of our lives some thought of the burlesque will flash across the mind as if in mockery of the reality; and at this moment, when I experienced all the sensations of a petrified body—of turning, or rather of being turned, into some adamantine material —I thought of the monstrous wolf sent by Psamathe to destroy the flocks of Peleus, petrified at the supplication of Tethys, and I naturally wondered whether, by some stretch of parallelism, I was considered the wolf on this occasion, and the lovely Heliotrope the sheep I had pursued! Next, my thoughts reverted to my school days in the dear planet millions of miles away, and I remembered the story of the Medusa's Head, and wondered whether the classic Hades, notwithstanding the distance from the Sun, had given up possession of the Gorgon, snakes

and all, for the express purpose of turning me into stone!

At all events, it was quite clear I was not deprived of the power of thought; and, considering I was quite incapable of moving an atom of my body—considering that I was as rigid and as hard as a bronze statue—this capability of reflection was a peculiarity in the case by no means to be overlooked by those curious in the study of natural phenomena.

The sense of sight, too, was not affected by the metamorphosis, for I could perceive the garden before me clad in the beauteous robes of its wondrous flora; and as I distinctly *heard* the rustle of the sweet breeze playing through their trellis-work of leaves, I came to the conclusion that I was still a sentient being, but turned by some means—either natural or the reverse—into a fleshy piece of perfect immobility.

This view of the case was corroborated by the peculiarity of my sensations; for though there was a total absence of every degree of

suffering, I experienced a feeling of intense curiosity as to what event would follow this most perplexing conversion of my body into a solid lump. Indeed, this sentiment overpowered every other feeling, and I very much doubt whether I could have altered my stony state of being if I had possessed the power. I felt assured that some strange occurrence, connected, perhaps, with Heliotrope, was on the eve of taking place, and my perfect rigidity rendered the power of attention more intense. All pulsation in my body had stopped, and my visual faculties were limited to seeing those portions of surrounding objects on which my eyes had rested at the moment of transformation. I longed to glance at my own limbs, to see how they looked in stone, and to ascertain, with a view to scientific discovery, whether, like other petrified bodies, I was impregnated with sparry or pyritical matter; whether, in short, I was a sort of human stalagmite, or simply a statue,—literally chiselled out of life.

At this moment the leaf of a tree was

blown gently against my arm, and the knowledge of this fact proved that the sense of touch was left me; and then I began to speculate as to whether I should grow hungry, and, if so, whether the perfume of the adjacent flowers would be sufficient to support the sort of life I possessed. Beyond and above all that, the same feeling of intense curiosity, which I before mentioned, was uppermost in my mind, and the slightest rustle of the shrubs and plants outside the grotto seemed an avant courier of some new surprise.

Nor was I kept long in suspense. The sound of a footstep fell upon my ear, and under ordinary circumstances I should have exclaimed, "My beating heart be still!" but at present nothing could be more tranquil than my heart of stone, though an intense feeling of anxiety pervaded it. The sound came nearer, then ceased. Then a gentle hand uplifted the floral drapery of the alcove, and a figure stepping within the recess disclosed to my astonished vision—for the

figure came within the focus of the fixed rays of vision—the beauteous form of the Princess Heliotrope!

My first impulse, notwithstanding my recent resolution, was to throw myself at her feet; but, alas! volition was denied me, and nothing material responded to the effort of will.

Equally in vain I attempted to speak—to call her by that loved name—but not a note issued from the dried-up caverns of sound, and only a feeble echo of the attempt fell inwardly on my brain.

The Princess was now quite close beside me, and I fancied I could feel the breath from those almond-scented lips falling like sweet air around my cold form; and, oh! ecstasy of delight, her little hand was placed gently on my shoulder, and at the same time, in a murmur of low music, she breathed gentle expressions of love, which, tremulous with emotion, sank into the inmost depths of my raptured soul. Again I essayed to speak; in vain I endeavoured to give some

sign of my rapture, but Fate, inexorable as the material I had become, refused me the slightest motion or the weakest whisper.

Mute and transfixed, I was compelled to listen to the sweetest music that ever swept melody through the chords of my existence, without being able to echo back the slightest indication of my joy. Never was mortal lover on the planet Earth in such a predicament; for though it is by no means uncommon to meet with living inanimates amongst both sexes in an island which shall be nameless, yet the peculiarity in this case was that I was imprisoned in myself, and all my faculties shut up in stone, like insects in amber. Still those soft syllables of love continued to flow from the coral fountain-source of all sweetness, and again and again I endeavoured to make known the consciousness of my bliss, but not a muscle moved, not even the slightest pulsation responded to the desperate effort I made to free myself from the invisible manacles that bound me.

As may very easily be conceived, my sensations were no longer pleasurable, but, on the contrary, painful in the extreme; for though the certainty of requited affection had at first thrilled me with happiness, the abortive effort to respond to the tender tones of the Princess grew more dreadful every moment. An intense longing to burst my chains, and awake from the conscious trance, took entire possession of me, and I thought my heart would have burst its stony walls. In an agony I again attempted to speak, to explain to the loved form beside me that my soul was imprisoned, and that a wall of adamant enclosed my living self.

A fresh horror at this moment overtook me, for every syllable the Princess uttered, though tender as before, started into a form of satire, and, as a true image is inverted on the retina of the eye, so her kind and loving words came with an inverted meaning, and seemed to breathe nothing but the bitterest irony! Then the thought suddenly occurred that all I was undergoing was a just

punishment for my presumption in having dared to worship such a divinity as the Princess; and fate had perhaps decreed that in all the future of my life, kisses should become stings, and the honey of existence wormwood or gall. Even the soft sighs of the lovely being near me appeared to grow into scornful laughter, and the words of devotion which a short while since had flown like love-birds from her lips, now seemed to hiss, as if changed into serpents.

For an instant I was relieved from these exquisite torments by the Princess withdrawing from the alcove; but she speedily returned, and though I was unable to direct my glance to what her hands might contain, I felt certain they were flowers, for a delicious odour filled all the grotto. At this, a sort of momentary relief stole over me, and I made one more desperate effort to be free, but had every nerve been steel, and my limbs as brazen as the Rhodian Colossus, they could scarcely have been less supple than my own flesh and blood ones. At the same moment,

however, the perfume in the grotto grew more intense, and suddenly I experienced a change of sensations. I felt a slight quiver pass through my frame, and a tremulous pulsation of my heart commenced. A warm glow rose from my feet upward, and the effort to move was no longer unsuccessful. My eyes, no longer fixed in one position, were enabled to view the Princess, and there, at the foot of my pedestal, reclined her wondrous form, mixed in, and mingled with, a profusion of blossoms and buds, with which she was strewing the floor of the alcove. Suddenly rising up, and not observing my return to a normal condition, she exclaimed, in playful yet tender accents: "Oh! thou stony image of the wanderer from Earth, so magically wrought by Saidiph's skill, couldst thou but know the weak heart which has allowed thine image to be there enshrined—couldst thou but see the foolish hand strewing an idol with flowers, what wouldst thou think of me? Wouldst thou fly to thine home far away in the blue

air, and forget for ever the maiden of the Sun?"

As she uttered these words, a fresh gush of delicious odour, distilled from the dear alembic of her ministering hands, filled all the spot around, and seemed by some magic means to loosen the bonds of my imprisonment.

In a state of almost delirious joy I descended from the pedestal, and before the bewildered Princess recovered from her surprise, I exclaimed aloud, incoherent with emotion: "Dost thou ask if I would fly from thee now thy love is recorded in words never to be effaced? Would the Heaven-seeker fly from its portals when their glory was found? Oh, believe me, now that my happy soul has inadvertently learned the secret of thy will to scatter treasures on my life, life itself becomes a paradise, and thou, my beloved Heliotrope, shalt reign there for ever."

This speech, considering my recent resolution and the trial of virtue I had gone through, was tolerably warm, but at that

precise moment I had lost all recollection of every antecedent, except that of love!

My unexpected change from perfect immobility to eloquent gesture and glowing language, might well, in ordinary cases, have resulted in the lady's fainting, and then my naturally calling for assistance, or taking advantage of her unconscious state to press her closer to my heart, or to revive by other means, so well known to the novelist, the fading crimson of her lips. Nothing, however, of the sort occurred; for as I spoke, the Princess, as though stung by an adder, retreated from me, and with a cloud of displeasure on her brow, bade me explain the cause of my abrupt intrusion into the sanctuary of her retreat, and by what means I had simulated the part of a statue, to play eavesdropper under shelter of a marble exterior!

Astounded at the change which had come over the spirit of my dream, and almost wishing myself turned into adamant again, "Lady," said I, "I regret beyond mea-

sure I cannot undertake to impart the cause of my having been rooted to that pedestal, solidified, petrified, stony, and astounded!"

"Then explain, sir, how you found your way thither."

"Certainly, most lovely lady," I exclaimed. "At the back of this grotto is a door leading into a passage, which passage leads into a garden precisely similar to this one. By that pathway I came here; and when I placed my foot on that pedestal, I found myself suddenly transformed into a state of immobility, which I should consider to be the result of some enchantment, did I not believe that natural marvels are as wonderful as unnatural ones, and I have no doubt even my stony case will bear explanation. Judging, by the sudden change in your manner, adorable Princess" (and here just a *soupçon* of irony was in my voice), "I fancied that at the moment I turned from marble into life, you commenced a transformation from life into marble."

At this my beauteous companion attempted to repress a smile, and then exclaimed, evidently in answer to her own thoughts:

"This is the Prince's doing, and is a just punishment to us both."

"Lady," I replied, "I am overjoyed to be included in any punishment where we are mutual sufferers."

"Thank you, sir; but perhaps the crime is not equal."

"My crime," I answered, "has been to soar too high."

"And mine," she rejoined, blushing through angry glances, "has been to exhibit an interest in the marble likeness of one unworthy of my regard."

These petulant changes of manner were quite unaccountable; one moment she looked all forgiveness, and the next, as some disagreeable recollection rose in her mind, the stormy clouds again made their appearance on the else clear horizon of her beauty. At all events, I determined to produce a *dénouement* if possible, so I answered:

"Oh! Heliotrope——" At this word an indomitable look of scorn shot like a dart from her flashing eyes, and in tones which stung my very soul, she cried:

"Do you not perceive, sir, some mistake? Do you imagine that, because you became, by some supernatural means, a sentient being enclosed in a statue, it necessarily follows that its external form resembled yourself? But, on the contrary, does it not strike you, that while you imagined yourself listening to my praises of yourself, I was in reality offering the incense of my flattery to another?"

This speech of my beautiful tormentor involved a new position, for which I was totally unprepared; and it seemed clear, judging by this speech, that the chalice of love which at all risks I believed I was about to drain, was held for other lips. There was a something, however, in the manner of the Princess which belied her words, and her tones partook more of personal pique than of wounded dignity. Experience on

Earth had taught me that when a fair one's anger assumed this form, there was little real cause for apprehension.

In the mean while, my companion had passed from the grotto into the garden, which I perceived was in every minute particular exactly a counterpart to my own. For some minutes I walked silently along, scarcely knowing what answer to make to her last words, but at length I gained sufficient courage to exclaim:

"If, noble lady, my outward lineaments resembled some favoured lover, my mistake in believing myself addressed will perhaps receive your pardon when you remember that you apostrophised the statue 'as the wanderer from another world,' which seemed to me conclusive evidence that the happy mortal so called was myself."

"Of what use would my love be?" she asked; and those few words were spoke in tones so inexpressibly tender, that I sank at her feet, and cried:

"Oh! I beseech you torture me no longer.

I have battled with love—I have fought desperately in the cause of virtue. The path which I believed would have led to happiness and to thee, I shunned, because I felt the deep crime even in thought I was committing against the Prince; nay, I prayed to Heaven for strength to aid me in the attempt to obliterate your image from my soul. The victory was almost won; and I beseech you do not, by kindness of tone or tenderness of look, snatch it from my grasp; for courage, virtue, duty, and thoughts of Heaven itself, fade before the torrent of adoration which threatens to wreck and destroy all else when you are near me."

To this the Princess answered, in low, tremulous tones:

"It has never till now fallen to my lot to be so entreated to withhold smiles and tenderness."

"Oh! I implore you torture me no more. Either bid me hence to exhibit my felon heart to the Prince, or tell me I am beloved, even if the delicious poison at once destroys me."

"Do you curious people on Earth term a lady's affection poison?"

"Oh! Heliotrope——"

At this word the same expression of intense anger I had before noticed crossed the features of my companion, and in imperious tones she demanded:

"Have you, then, dared to love the Princess Heliotrope?"

This question, after all that I had confessed, seemed to me wonderfully unnecessary; but I answered, without hesitation:

"By every treasure that the Sun doth know, I love her as the sweet supreme of all!"

What the lady's answer might have been to this speech (smacking a little of the footlights) I am not prepared to say, for our conversation was interrupted by the approach of the Prince. Upon this I braced up my nerves for what in English idiom is termed "a scene," and almost a pleasurable feeling of relief stole over me as I felt that a culminating point in my destiny

had arrived. Like almost all my expectations in this sphere, I was doomed to disappointment, for the Prince advanced to meet me with a serene and smiling aspect. In place of a tornado bursting forth at my presence in his own garden, tête-à-tête with the Princess Heliotrope (who vanished at his approach), the quiet sunshine of a genial nature beamed upon his beautiful features.

Seeing, I suppose, my embarrassment, he at once, to relieve me, took the initiative, and astonished me by exclaiming, in a manner which would have done credit to a gossiping young Roman proud of his acquaintance with a Greek phrase or tone:

"Well, Heliophilus, τι καινον—what, none during this long interval of time! Well, then, what do you think of our duplicate gardens? Did we succeed in presenting you with a counterpart of our own little pleasure-grounds? How did you relish your journey through the mysterious passage? and, above all, did you enjoy the power of an electric agency, which rendered you in-

animate, while the secrets of a young maiden's heart were being divulged by herself for your especial benefit ?"

There was so much of the humorous of manner preponderating in this speech, that I could scarcely forbear laughing, as I answered:

"Indeed, Prince, I never experienced so much intense misery in my life as during the short period of my incarceration. But what *can* I think of the strange events which have brought me here into your presence? I almost feel as if I had been performing the rôle of one of the characters in a book of adventures possessed by us Earthites, called 'The Arabian Nights.'"

"Dear Heliophilus," said the Prince, "you shall be made acquainted with the why and wherefore of all the inconveniences you have had to endure, upon another occasion; suffice it at present for you to know that the history of the most trifling event during your short sojourn in this planet is all familiar to me, and so well have you deserved

happiness at our hands—for we can forgive error, not crime—that we are about to confer the greatest boon ever bestowed upon a stranger in Heliopolis—we are going to present you with a wife."

"Ah," thought I, "then now my punishment is about to commence." The amiable tones—like the Spartan beginning his battle to the soft tones of the flute—were but the prelude to the Prince's waging deadly feud with my feelings, by presenting me with some damsel of the Sun whom I never could love. At all events, I felt it was impossible that the Prince would bestow upon me his own beloved and beautiful Princess—at least, I had never heard of such generosity. Then the idea suggested itself that my admired statue, which I had lost from my garden, had become gifted with life, but I could scarcely continue to believe in such a miracle even in this world of strange events, so, utterly confused, I exclaimed:

"Oh! my most gracious Prince, I cannot

hope that the one I love is fated to be mine, so I implore you——"

"The lady we intend you to wed," quoth he, "is she who was your companion a few moments since."

"What mystery is this? That lady was the Princess Heliotrope!"

"Not at all," said he, quietly; "the demoiselle is my wife's sister, which makes all the difference, you know."

"Merciful Powers! then she is her counterpart to a degree which is miraculous!"

"So are the two gardens alike, this one and your own, but they are not identical."

"But, dear Prince, when I was first introduced to the two ladies, it is true they bore a family likeness, but the beauty of each differed sufficiently to prevent an error in any one endowed with the least discernment or memory."

"Truly, but be it known to you, my friend, there is a little fact connected with the secret affairs of this globe which you have

evidently forgotten, although it has been already explained. Love has the power of increasing personal beauty to an almost unlimited extent. The Princess Heliosweet evinced her toleration generally by falling in love with yourself, and her beauty consequently increasing, she became so precisely similar to her sister, whom I have the honour to call my wife, that even I should be sometimes puzzled as to their identity were it not that the coronet of light surrounding the brow of the Princess, my beloved spouse, is composed of aërial heliotropes, whereas the wreath which delights to dwell in unsubstantial form over the brow of the Princess, her sister, is formed of lilies—an especial and peculiar sign of maidenhood amongst subjects."

Trembling with emotion, I cried:

"Tell me, I beseech you, are all my struggles against folly and crime known to you? For at this moment, with happiness within my grasp, I dare not—would not, accept the boon from your generous hand with

the belief that I suffer in your estimation for even the want of resolution. But oh! Prince, the soul that adores beauty is surrounded by temptations from which the cold and impassive are free."

In the most gentle tones he answered:

"I am aware of all: your first mistake, your desire to dispel the image that haunted you, your visit to Saidiph, and, above all, your prayer offered to the UNSEEN for resolution to combat successfully with evil, when the two paths lay before you."

"Thank Heaven, dear Prince! but still I am not free from blame."

"More so, Heliophilus, than you believe, since your excessive love for the beautiful, though it led you into temptation, was the means of your passing the ordeal unscathed. The same cause, too, if you remember, suggested your appeal to the Power out of yourself; and had you selected the gate which your evil genius for a moment prompted you to open, you would have been

reserved for quite a different fate to that which now awaits you."

"And where might that dreadful path have conducted me?"

"It would have led you first to the confines of Heliopolis; from thence to the ocean, and there you would have been shipped for those distant lands to which I have before alluded, where flourish folly and crime."

"And at what especial spot landed, Prince?"

"In an island where a monster called war lies perhaps for years dormant and festering in men's brains, and then breaks forth into a fever of agony and blood.

"Where the cities and towns are decked at night with fair human flowers trodden under men's feet by the eternal Satyr-dance, and the delicate tint of the rose is crushed into the scarlet of the poppy.

"Where one of the chief sources of the country's revenue arises from the sale of demoralising, brutalising drink.[1]

[1] In London there are 2500 bakers, 990 buttermen, 1700

"Where cattle (four-footed beasts, of which we have no specimen here) are driven into towns for the inhabitants to eat, tottering on, lame and agonised, to the shambles, attempting on their weary way to lick up the moist mud to cool their fevered tongues.

"Where horses (another sort of animal) are used in public conveyances precisely as though they were machines,—their muscles steel, their nerves iron, their limbs brass, and their poor weary hearts made of cogs and nuts, and pulleys and screws,—And these things, Heliophilus, are *crimes*.

"Then amongst follies to sigh for, or to smile at, you would find it a spot

"Where the houses of the people are built in such a way that a portion of the community—the labourers or servants of the Termites—live underground, with gratings to look up through.

"Where the churches generally are placed

butchers, 3000 grocers, 900 dairy keepers, 400 fishmongers-1300 greengrocers. Total, 10,790 sellers of the necessaries of life, and 11,000 public-houses!

in the centre of decaying humanity, appearing more like the largest cenotaph in a necropolis than a building wherein the eternal ONE is adored.

"Where the great men of the day occasionally meet together in large halls, ladies being permitted to enter only as witnesses to the lions feeding, and are placed in galleries set apart for the purpose, the lovely creatures looking down upon the learned pundits like goddesses in Olympus, glancing through reeking vapours on the nether world of roast joints and pudding.

"Where giants and dwarfs—the Alpha and Omega of Nature's eccentricities—delight the masses more than a lecture by Yadaraf;[1] and a pig with two tails traverses the attractions of the noblest forms of art.

"Where, in your walks abroad, you would meet with men wearing things on their heads called hats, which retain heat, admit wet,

[1] Curious! This word, if spelt backward, or written by the boustrophedon method, would spell the name of our own illustrious chemist Faraday.

permit no recumbent or lounging position, and which, moreover, are so ugly, that people are glad to take them off on every possible occasion, except, possibly, when a lady friend passes in the streets.

"And if all these things were not punishment enough, Heliophilus, you would find, when you rambled through some gallery devoted to pictorial art, kit-cat gentlemen in black coats and in gold frames usurping the place which ought to be sacred to the creations of fancy and imagination, and to copies of the beautiful in the external world of things."

"Merciful Powers!" said I, shuddering, "how fortunate I was to reject the path which led to such regions!"

"And yet," answered the Prince, "amongst even vices and follies, good greatly preponderates over evil, and in a few centuries it is believed that wars will have ceased; the goat-legs of the glades be turned wholly into men; drunkenness become rare; dumb creatures be cared for; houses be plus another story, and minus a basement, save perhaps for cellar-

age; ladies be admitted as guests to the repasts of the literati; Tom Thumbs remain neglected for the marvels of the physical sciences; portrait-painters be banished; and, the contingency being more remote, some head-gear invented at once useful, manly, and becoming!"

"But," rejoined I, "as these changes have not yet occurred, again I say, how thankful I ought to feel that my choice led me here—even though the necessity of marrying be included! Ah! how inexpressibly delicate is your mode of conferring a favour. You present me with a matchless jewel in a nonchalant manner, as if it were a trifle, and you infer that my other merits have obtained what in reality is due to your generosity and consideration."

"Nay, my good friend, I had nothing whatever to do with the young lady's falling in love with you, and possibly you are not aware that the perfume which so raised your spirits on the night when you honoured us with your presence at dinner, produced an animation of manner, and power of diction,

which entirely captivated the poor little heart of Heliosweet."

At this the colour mounted to my cheeks, for I felt the borrowed nature of the plumage which had pleased; indeed, so deeply did I blush, that the Sun at that moment seen from the Earth must have appeared of a deep scarlet.

"Moreover," continued the Prince, "you must know that any personal recommendation the Princess may have discovered, arises from your excessive devotion to the Beautiful in all its forms, for in this country the outward appearance of a person depends upon the quality of his mind."

"Is it possible the effect of mind upon matter is thus manifest?"

"Yes, but wherefore your surprise; is it not so with you? Are not your Poets, Painters, and Sculptors of celebrity wonderfully handsome?"

"I am not exactly prepared to say," I replied; "but I fancy we should find such physiological betrayal very inconvenient."

"Why so?"

"Because no woman would then be content to marry with an ugly man, nor a man with an ugly woman."

"There, I think, you are wrong, because plain people with us find quite as ready a market as those that are beautiful, for those with a limited perception of personal beauty, possess but a limited appreciation of its finer parts: ergo, they are satisfied with the ordinary, without being aware that it is such."

"Ah," said I, "but some of our greatest criminals have been most beautiful in external form, so it is clear the same principles do not hold good on Earth as in the Sun."

"But you forget the element of love, Heliophilus, which, from all you say, is in a more fully developed state here than there."

"Does that account for the prevalence of personal beauty amongst your subjects?"

"Certainly; our matches are necessarily love-matches, and, according to the laws of physiology, love influences the future form of the beautiful; for love, you must remember, is one of the elementary causes of things,

and its energy and prevalence induce materials to take an outward shape in harmony with its inward and subtle mandates."

At this point of the conversation I began to feel a little out of my element, so I rose to the surface of things by exclaiming:

"But surely, Prince, it is not good to be loved simply for beauty of appearance?"

"But you, forget, oh sapient friend of mine! that good looks are here the sure index to a highly cultivated and richly-endowed mind. All the more moral qualities are reflected, or rather manifested, in every feature; nay, the very shape of a chin, nose, mouth, or head, are owing not to external but to internal causes."

"But," said I, still sceptical on the subject, "supposing that the preference of a lady for her lover is entirely owing to his personal appearance, the demoiselle foreknowing that *therefore* he is talented, does she not proceed from effect to cause, instead of from cause to effect?"

"And why not? Either synthesis or analysis will do equally well, and will produce

the same result. Take a beautiful flower, and unravel its leafy mysteries one by one, trace out its fibres and its veins, and its mode of nourishment, and you arrive at the conclusion that all its machinery is perfect, and made for some express purpose with an external form of beauty. With this knowledge you have only to regard a lovely plant to feel assured, without further trouble, that all its complicated works are perfect. So with us; we have only to see a beautiful person to know that the inward faculties are highly wrought and full of excellence."

"I wish, dear Prince, it was so in our sphere."

"Some of these days," answered he, "things may be so ordained, for Nature never stands still, and while seeming to work in circles they are not circles in reality, for the lines diverge at the apparent point of juncture into fresh expansions for ever and ever.[1] But enough of this; for you had better seek the Princess, and make your peace."

[1] This requires explanation. People who think they per-

"Before I find myself in her dear presence," said I, "will you satisfy my curiosity as to tell me whether my strange journey in this garden involved any power removed from the natural laws which govern the natural world?"

"By no means," quoth Helionax. "The garden we are now in is part of the larger one wherein you enjoyed your first tête-à-tête with the Princess Heliosweet, and belongs exclusively to her. The pathway has long existed, having been originally made for certain plants which feed upon a more subdued light than others of their kind. The statue of my sister, which you worshipped with such devotion, was sculptured for you by my order, and removed when the proper time had arrived. Your sudden imprisonment, and the intricate interlacings of the plants, were the result of a

ceive in Nature a repetition of events at certain intervals of time, are apt to believe that Nature works in cycles; in fact, that she repeats herself at certain fixed and revolving periods. The form, however, which seemingly recurring events assume, as expressed by the Prince, is not that of a circle ◯ but that of a figure called a helix .

knowledge of some of the peculiarities of floriculture. After you had traversed the passage, and resisted temptation, you placed your foot on the pedestal, which being connected with an enormous galvanic battery, you were negatively electrified, which imparted all the solid appearance that induced the Princess to believe you a genuine piece of stone, and her surprise when the electric circuit was cut off, restoring you to animation, was only equalled by her mystification and anger when you addressed her as 'Heliotrope;' for though she is aware of her likeness to her sister, through love of you, still when you first met the semblance was not so striking. This is the reason she was petulant and morose, and the cause, moreover, of all those discrepancies at once so puzzling and so agreeable."

"And where may I seek for her divine self?" I asked.

"Yonder," said the Prince, pointing to a portion of the garden partitioned off by a thick hedge, the leaves of which resembled emeralds, and the blossoms turquoise. I en-

tered by a little arched opening, over which were hovering a multitude of bird-like insects, whose colours and forms changed every instant, according to the angle at which the light fell on their glistening pretty bodies. Within this retreat I found the Princess Heliosweet, surrounded by attendant ladies, employed in making little articles of personal adornment. I also observed that other curious specimens of the feathered tribe, called diamond-doves, from the sparkling nature of their song, were as useful as exquisitely lovely. The ladies, it seemed, were weaving small hillocks of some delicately-fine material into all sorts of decorative matters, and before their stock of working ammunition could become exhausted, away flew these winged messengers, singing with delight at their occupation, and darting upward amongst the most gossamer-like clouds, scarcely visible to ordinary vision, brought back in their beaks specks so fine that the united labour of a whole flock of these pretty creatures amounted in the aggregate to a contribution about the size of a pea. This

they deposited on the velvet elytron, and so agile were they in their movements, that the supply they procured was never exhausted, and the ladies worked and laughed, and chatted and worked, just for all the world as if they were telling some story in the gardens of Boccaccio.

The Princess herself was seated beneath a tree, whose leaves were composed of a substance resembling talc, which possessed the power of expansion during periods of rain. Thus during such times they formed crystal-like bowers, but at this moment, as the sky was serene, they dropped in graceful festoons.

With hesitating step I approached the bewitching group, and as the Princess raised her eyes and perceived me, I observed the glance of haughty displeasure was by no means gone, though I felt greatly relieved by her making a sign to her handmaidens to retire to a short distance.

Upon this I bent upon one knee, and venturing to take the little hand extended, raised it to my lips, which reminded me, by

reason of attitude and act, of a certain Drawing-Room ceremony on Earth, which occurs twice or thrice during a London season, when the best little Queen that ever sat upon a throne receives the salutations of her subjects.

"Dearest lady and most gracious Princess!" I exclaimed, "I have sought your presence to declare my supreme sorrow at having unintentionally played the part of 'the listening slave,' and thereby learned the existence of the sweetest conspiracy that ever lady entered into with her own heart. Thy dear voice spoke the praises of a wanderer from some far-off sphere, and being at that moment ensconced in marble, congealed, but alive, petrified but attentive, I dared to believe that the outward form of my humble self was the one addressed, though it seems the magic of my metamorphosis was increased by the fact that I myself bore not the lineaments of I myself, but of some other happy individual adored by thee."

Of course I desired to seem to believe what the Princess had herself told me, more espe-

cially as by so doing I involved her in the dilemma of a little contradiction—an opening of the campaign which seemed to me to be in accordance with the known laws of strategy and generalship of love. To this speech, however, the Princess made no sort of reply, but proceeded with her work, interlacing little gold-like threads, which she pulled from a sort of grass growing at her feet, with the web she was weaving from the store supplied by her pretty slaves the diamond-birds, who, by the way, had twitted off at my approach, and were now hovering like star-dust in the upper air.

"Your secret, dearest Princess," I continued, "is as sacred with me as though it were Eleusinian."

Still no response, save an additional degree of digital industry; but as I never had been able to appreciate the pleasure of a monologue, I thought a direct question might gain a response, whereupon I said:

"I am sure, adorable lady, that you will forgive the natural curiosity which impels me to ask what sort of person I looked out-

wardly when my senses were locked up in stone; at a time, too, when I misappropriated the sweet syllables intended for another?"

A sort of half-smile rested for a moment on the features of my companion, but still not a word issued from those dewy lips, and still those shreds of gold were crossed, and re-crossed, and counter-crossed for all the world as if I were a suitor at the feet of Penelope herself.

"Oh, oh," thought I, "this sort of thing will never do, so I will fain try another description of artificial fly, and see whether I cannot get a rise from this most lovely and royal trout, lying perdu in the depths of her own thoughts." With this resolve I waited a moment, and then exclaimed:

"I implore you, dearest Heliotrope——"

At this magic "open sesame" the doors of her anger flew apart, and scarcely had the word passed my lips, when a flash of anger shot athwart her brow, and as the mimic lightning passed, a little musical thunder burst forth as follows:

"You desire to know the form you assumed when, violating a lady's sanctuary, you listened to words never intended for the ears of the living;—know, then, you assumed the antithesis of yourself, and I pray go seek for such a being through space, and when discovered, you are commissioned to bring him into my presence forthwith."

I was glad at any price to be able to bid the obdurate rock of silence to gush forth in a rivulet of sound, even though of a sort not peculiarly palatable or refreshing, so I answered:

"Had I a thousand wings, I would unfurl them all to do your bidding; but, oh dear lady, the task is needless, for I swear to you I am so completely changed from my former self, through love of the Princess Helio—— (here I maliciously paused)—Helio-*sweet*, that my own antithesis is here thy slave and worshipper for evermore."

A bright gleam of sunshine, despite herself, broke over the features of the lovely demoiselle, and, as it did so, my friends, the diamond-doves, seeing, I suppose, that all

went well, came fluttering down from their blue heights, giving vent to the most delicious notes of pleasure; the flowers around bloomed with fresher dyes; and the leaves of adjacent shrubs and trees, as the American poet has it,

"Clapped their little hands with joy."

To this enchanting look a deep blush succeeded, and in low tones she inquired "Whether it was by accident I pronounced her name aright?"

Upon this, in impassioned tones, I told her that the word "sweet" was so natural an adjunct to her name, that I had only failed to pronounce it from my dislike to utter a truism!—a piece of sophistry which, I admit, made me wince a little. Then I explained to her in sober truth, abandoning every species of concetto, however well turned or Waller-like, all the events of the past; my love; my struggles to avoid doing a wrong against Prince Helionax even in word; my visit to Saidiph; my imprisonment in the grotto; my sensations there, and my

extravagant address to the image. Then I reverted, of course in the most guarded manner, to the real cause of my error; and, just as a lover on the planet Earth would wind up an ardent declaration of passion by praying for an early day of union, so I concluded my recapitulation of love and worship by beseeching her to become mine as speedily as possible.

During this speech the quantity of embroidery got through was perfeetly miraculous; and having exhausted all the little hillocks of cloud-wool, she tapped against the side of a small metallic-like flower-bell hanging near, at the sound of which hundreds of her industrious feathered ministers came flying down laden with a fresh supply from the ethereal repositories.

After a pause of some duration, and in tones of constraint, the Princess asked me "If I had loved any maiden before I visited the Sun?"

Strangely enough, for the first time since my residence in the orb of light, the remem-

brance of Christabel flashed across me, and a sudden shadow passed athwart the brightness of my joy. With a woman's intuitive perception of the truth, the Princess simply remarked:

"At least my rival and myself are separated some distance, but are you aware that neither time nor space has the least influence on the duration of love?"

"How mean you, dear Heliosweet?"

"Simply, that if you have loved a being upon Earth, you must love her still—love her in myself."

"And would you, dear one, be content to accept of affection second hand?"

"Oh yes; love is love, no matter where engendered, or where transplanted: again I say, if you have ever loved in that planet, which even at this moment is discernible, pale and afar off in the fields of ether above us, that love will never die; and though you fancy you love me with a fresh affection, because *her* outward self and my outward self are totally dissimilar, yet it is the self-same

sentiment in her case and in my case, only differing in its application."

This strange statement puzzled me exceedingly, and I rejoined: "Surely, dear Heliosweet, my love for a being exquisite beyond all conception of beauty in my world; so refined in mind, so spiritually attuned in physical attributes,—one, withal, who derives the means of supporting existence by the mere inhalation of delicate odours,—surely, I say, love for such a being, approaching in nature to those immortals who people the airy chambers of the sky, is of a higher, more refined, and a more subtle description than love for a creature of Earth, who eats meat three times a day, and whose finest perceptions of the beautiful are but coarse outlines of the living forms in this sublimated world, wherein my beloved Heliosweet reigns queen of all?"

"It matters not," answered she. "Love in the immaterial universe is of the same elementary nature that gold is in the material world. It bears no analysis, no decompo-

sition, no transmutation; and, when once created, exists through all time and all eternity, and knows no barriers, not even the unfathomable regions of space! I believe, Heliophilus, that you love me; but your love for Heliosweet, maiden of the Sun, differs neither in intensity nor kind from your love for Christabel, maiden of the Earth."

"How know you her name?" cried I, greatly surprised.

"Why, dear Heliophilus, are you not more curious to continue the investigation of love's power and quality, than to learn how I became aware of a simple fact? Do you think the stars whisper no secrets to one another? But, oh man! man! how eagerly you grasp at the little motes which float about in the regions of small wonders, and leave the great questions unexplored and uncared for!"

"Heliosweet, are you angry?"

"No, indeed," said she, sadly; "but when I think of the grand and sublime truths which are expressed by that little word *love*, I am

overwhelmed with their vastness. When I remember that the same power—love—which bids the usually timid bird beat with its soft wings, in an agony of courageous dread, the giant hand threatening injury to her young,—has been the impulse to launch worlds into space; when I think that all creation is held together by no bands of adamant, no springs of steel, but by the divine influence of this so-called LOVE, I am overwhelmed with the contemplation; and even thou dear, my heart's best adored in this world, art absorbed in the vortex of my soul when the shadow of these things falls on its depths."

The tones of Heliosweet's voice were indescribably tender, and taking my hand in hers with sweet confidence, she bent over it, and a tear—yes, a veritable tear from the eyes of a child of light—fell on my hand. No wonder as it fell the whirr of invisible wings swept it from the desecration of its contact with myself, and a shudder passed over me as I thought how unworthy I was to possess

a being whose nature was attuned so exquisitely to the harmonies of the Unseen. A strange depression stole over me, which I attempted to shake off by exclaiming:

"Oh, Heliosweet, my beloved, there is something so unspeakably superior in the tone of your intellect to mine, that fear lest I am unworthy to possess a casket of such riches takes possession of my soul; forgive me, therefore, when I beseech you to let our espousals take place at once."

"Our espousals?" said she, astonished.

An icy feeling fell on my heart at these words, but I replied:

"Yes, dear Heliosweet, our nuptials;—are we not to be united?"

"Never more than we are. I scarcely know what you mean."

My sensations at this speech may better be conceived than described, and a feeling growing every moment more saddening took entire possession of me, as I cried, "Are we, then, to love and be separated?"

"No, no," she answered, "we shall never

be parted; we *are* united—our espousals *have* been solemnised, and I *am* thy wife, blessing thee now, and for ever."

"My wife! How? For pity's sake explain this strange avowal!"

"Do we not love one another?"

"Ay, I believe with depth unfathomable."

"Do not our souls commingle?"

"I know not, but hope so."

"Has not my love for thee made me resemble my sister to such a degree that——"

"Yes, yes, dear one," said I, hastily interrupting.

"And thou, Heliophilus—thou art so changed that thy—thy Christabel would mistake thee for a god."

"I am glad of it, beloved one."

"Then what ceremony do you expect? Our love is our espousal, and already your spirit commingles with mine."

"Oh, oh," thought I, "this may be all very satisfactory for the aborigines of the Sun;" but being still, I suppose, in some degree of the earth earthy, I by no means approved of

a marriage so entirely spiritual, and therefore I exclaimed:

"Our spirits doubtless commingle, dear Heliosweet, but not our intellects;—therein you are apart from me. You dive into the abyss of the inscrutable, where I cannot follow."

"Then you wish for Christabel?"

"No, no; I desire none but your own dear self."

"And yet you say our minds are dissimilar?"

"Yes; but I still hope eventually, under your sweet tutelage, to comprehend all that you comprehend. You say you are my wife?"

"We are united; call me wife if you will."

"May I ask if we are to live together?"

"It matters not; but yes, if you will."

"Where?"

"In all places, for ever."

"Oh! Heliotrope," I cried, "remember such ethereal love is not fitted for my base

nature; and let me confess it, this moment I am dying to throw my arms around your loved form, and to press you to my heart."

"The moment you embrace me I am lost to you for ever in this world."

This was a little beyond my powers of endurance, so, to prove how completely I discredited the statement, I endeavoured to suit my action to the words; but avoiding my attempt, she exclaimed:

"Why wilt thou mix the dross of love with its purity? I am thine in spirit, why seek for the dregs when the aroma is all thine own?—why desire the chalice of clay when the essence it contains is thine to quaff for ever?"

Still all unsatisfied, I replied:

"Heliosweet, my love, let me again remind you, I am not so ethereal as those born in this sphere, and my idea of marriage and your own are very distinct. At this moment I feel an unconquerable desire to press you to my heart, for the certainty of possessing you requires, to my dimmer

sense, some evidence from the material world."

"Then you will not be spirit with spirit, possessing the incense without the lees left in the alembic which distils it?"

"Do not ask me if I will not, but I could not, dear Heliosweet. The touch of thy dear hand thrills me with delight, so I pray you let us think of our spirits mingling when in regions more attenuated than even these."

Heliosweet remained silent for some minutes, and looking up into my eyes, while the love-light in her own suggested an eternity of affection, asked me "Whether I was aware that a marriage solemnised after the fashion of marriages on Earth would necessitate a residence on Earth? and," added she, slyly, "the voyage is a long one, and a meeting with Christabel might be inconvenient. Besides," she said, "I do not see why you should not endeavour so to purify your nature, that an union of spirit with spirit should content you, sufficiently at least as

for you not to enforce my degeneracy to suit the exigencies of a lower world. But still I am yours; I am your bride here, with the essence of love as my offering, or I am your bride there (pointing upward), willing to become a child of Earth, fallen in state and station, but still elevated in soul by the power and strength of affection."

At this proof of Heliosweet's devotion I could have fallen at her feet and worshipped her; but, before a response was possible, she placed her hand in mine, and continued:

"I am willing to leave this bright orb and sojourn with you in your distant home; but first let me ask you if you feel *totally* incapable of rising to the tenuity of condition needful for our union in the Sun? Are you willing to make *one* effort to save me from a descent to material creation, by exalting your nature so as to meet me here on terms equal as our love?"

"Dearest Heliosweet," I answered, "tell me by what means I can hope to reach the altitude of your nature—describe to me the sort of ordeal I should have to pass—and

then, all truthfully, I will confess whether the old leaven of earthly feelings is too strong to make success possible."

"No ordeal whatever," she answered, "save the trial as to whether you will relinquish me as your terrestrial bride, and dwell with me here, lord of a spirit-being, the husband of a child of light!"

I paused.—I glanced at the glorious being at my side, majestic not only in the proud stamp which intellect ever imparts to her favoured disciples, but equally glorious in physical beauty, and not the less so from an expression of a spiritual dreamy sort of loveliness which dwelt in fitful moods upon her countenance. Minutely I questioned myself whether, without repenting of my resolution, I could promise to content myself with the refined description of love which she—a daughter of the Sun—could offer me; and again I glanced at the splendour of her beauty and the marvellous graces of her form. She never moved but what the action seemed the result of an harmonious inner

being, full of the melodies of thought; and when she smiled, the light of an immortal being played around. She never spoke but the music of Heaven seemed to echo in the low and tender tones, while the slightest contact with her hand filled me with an emotion as though love imprisoned in my soul felt the angel of its deliverance. I therefore exclaimed, pausing no more:

"No, Heliosweet, my beloved, the impulses which entered into my nature when born on Earth, live too strong within me to permit me to cheat myself into the belief that I can become at present better, purer than I am. Nay, more; I will even confess to you that I am longing to return to that little speck of light shining above us, for Providence so wisely adapts us for external things, that, having been born on Earth, the beauty and refinement here would in time become unsuited to my senses; and whilst I acknowledge how vastly superior is all in this wondrous sphere, yet there are a thousand attractions in the dear home

of my birth, which you, my beloved, will learn to enjoy. I cannot remember its spring flowers, its summer breezes, its Christmas fires, its thousand charities, and the big heart of human nature, which with many spots and flaws, is, after all, a whole and a healthy one, without longing to return to its sweet glades, and to take thee to the little humble altar in the village church, and there to offer up my thanks to our God—which is your God—for the boon of such a wife—such a being as Heliosweet."

Whatever the words might be, the tones of my voice at least were eloquent, and my sweet companion replied:

"Then be it so; and ere long I shall gaze at the Sun from that world your home, which is bathed in its bright beams, and will learn to so mould the present that the future will receive us—THERE."

Like an inspired prophetess she pointed upward while uttering the last words; and, forgetful of all save her beauty and devotion, I drew her, for the first time, close to

my heart, and held her beloved form within the circle of my arms. She made no attempt to be free, even although the Prince, whom I had not observed approach, stood nearly touching us, as also Alûtedon, Saidiph, the Princess Heliotrope and a band of maidens, who drew around us; and I felt that the exact reverse of an apotheasis was about to take place, for a goddess was to be transformed into a mortal.

Music so exquisite that the clouds opened from the higher heavens to listen, broke forth, and I found myself with my bride in the centre of a circle of friends and attendants. Not a syllable was spoken. Smiles beaming with kindness illumined the features of all, and flowers of magical dyes rose spontaneously at our feet. A thousand birds, whose luscious songs made sweet variations in the strains of melody pouring from unseen sources, fluttered above and about, and a multitude of star-birds, with diamond beaks and golden plumage, clustered on the sides of a number of rose-tinted clouds, and fes-

tooned them like the folds of a curtain. Between these folds, a vista, dazzling in brightness, opened a way into space, with a flight of steps leading to the path. With my arm enfolding my bride I ascended the plinths, and approached the spot where the steps terminated, and where the path through the regions of space commenced. The Prince and the Princess Heliotrope (still without a word being spoken) followed us up the ascent, and Heliosweet kneeling down, the Prince placed his hands on her bending head, and her sister stooped and fondly embraced her. Music still poured forth in indescribable beautiful strains, while the curtains of clouds gradually descending, hid all from my sight save the form of my beloved. Yes, a wall of frosted silver was now between us and the Sun, while penetrating into space was the sapphire-path leading back to the planet of my birth.

Again I pressed my beloved Heliosweet to my heart, and whispered words of encouragement, whilst a propelling power launched

us on the airy ocean, and a delicious feeling of passing rapidly onward took possession of our senses.

Like a mote of light, onward we sped, and ah! how different my sensations from those I experienced when before sailing o'er the ethereal sea! Heliosweet rested in my arms, and a smile dwelt on her lips, not like the sunny gleam which shone in her more animated moments, but subdued into a dreamy expression, suggesting a partly unconscious condition, and yet one of perfect happiness and entire trust.

I might possibly have experienced a feeling of remorse at removing so rare a being from her bright home, but I knew how brief would be our sojourn in the world of my birth, and the hope beamed like a star on my imagination, when it suggested the idea of again perhaps visiting the orb we had left, or possibly even meeting the same loved forms I had known there, in some other world, nearer even than the Sun to the Temple of the great UNSEEN. A feeling, too,

of deepest consolation arose from the reflection that, whether living in the Earth or in some other orb,—whether a being in some far-off world in Nadir, or a highly-gifted and spiritual one in the highest point of Zenith itself,—still presiding over each and all is that same unspeakable ONE; and I felt that my beloved Heliosweet was still beneath the shadow of the wings of the Illimitable. These and a thousand other similar reflections occupied my mind, as, in a state of dreamy delight, I felt passing onward, although, of course, there was no sensation of positive motion.

At this juncture a strange alteration took place in the features of Heliosweet. Over them fell a veil of almost opaque lustre, which at first only partially concealed her face, but, increasing in opacity as we proceeded, at length hid her countenance completely from my gaze. This curious effect puzzled me not a little; but after some consideration I attributed it to the fact that as we receded from the Sun's attraction our

bodily functions underwent a change, gradually fitting us for the planet we were approaching. This belief seemed to bear corroboration, as I observed the curious veil of light beginning to fade; but as her features grew again into distinctness, my surprise may well be conceived when I perceived that they assumed the exact *semblance of Christabel!*.

Whatever my feelings might have been I am unable to say, for all other sensation was suddenly lost in one of the most extreme cold, so much so that my blood seemed to freeze in my veins. At the same moment the form of my lovely charge—lovely whether Heliosweet or Christabel—melted from my grasp; my body, instead of being borne on the pliant air, rested on a hard surface; a sound of rippling water seemed close by; a soft breeze fanned my cheek; the odour of flowers exhaled around; and at the same moment some strange power shook my arm, and a well-known voice exclaimed,

"My good fellow, you will catch your death of cold sleeping on the damp grass!"

Where was I? What could such earthly vernacular mean? Could I still be in my senses, or my senses in me? Yes; all was sober reality, even to the Hydropathic Doctor beseeching me to stir myself; here was his garden; here the bed of heliotropes near which I had gone to sleep; and, indeed, everything around me was exactly in the status quo ante, including even myself; so that in the words of Terence I could exclaim:

"Homo sum, humani nihil alienum a me puto."

As for the Sun himself, I suppose, as he descended down his western journey, my dreams had necessarily come to a conclusion, and the lovely being I fancied lying in my arms I was forced to believe had vanished from, or never knew, my embrace. A gold line of crimson just tipped the horizon, and as I rose, still rather confused with my long nap, I almost fancied I could discern the

bride of my bright vision fade in the light air, her eyes beaming with saddened love, and her hand raised pointing to her home, whither she was winging her trackless flight!

Sleeping so long during the changes in the temperature made me feel languid and depressed, and after patiently listening to a little lecture from my good friend the Doctor upon the folly of courting cold or fever, I was glad to escape into my own room, and at once dotted down the principal features of my strange dream, even then scarcely able to determine whether I had paid a veritable visit to Heliopolis, and feeling in my heart a secret regret that I had awoke to the dull realities of life.

The next morning, however, brought more refreshing and more healthy feelings, and in the course of a few weeks I sent the result of my labours to "an eminent publisher." An interview with this gentleman was so satisfactory, that I resolved to present myself once more to Sir Roger de Griffin, taking especial care not to inflict

him with "Heliondé" in manuscript—a most judicious precaution, inferring a knowledge of human nature highly useful to authors in general, more especially when a favour is expected.

The claws of Sir Roger had grown a little less sharp than formerly, and his voice more mellow; and being, moreover, quite decided in his own mind that his niece's happiness depended on her marrying the object of her choice, my most humble self, I gained his consent to our union, and the darling Christabel is now all my own—at least I have every reason to believe so—the only little flaw in our happiness being the occasional exhibition of a slight degree of jealousy of an imaginary rival named Heliosweet!

An amusing instance of this occurred some few months after our wedding. It so happened, that one day our breakfast consisted of a little domestic broil (it was our very first tiff), and pouting her pretty lips, and allowing a crystal drop or two to trickle down her soft, plump cheeks, she made me

appear a very wicked person indeed, albeit I have quite forgotten the cause of our quarrel, if cause there happened to be. After the storm was past, I went my way sorrowing and contrite; and after spending a very wretched day in the city, I returned to dinner, anticipating a more than ordinary good one, for Sir Roger had sent us a basket of game, which had been pronounced by our *chef* (a fine name for Heliondé's cook!) as exactly fitted for that day's festive board. My feelings, therefore, may be conceived when I found that Christabel had "gone out, and wouldn't be home to dinner," but on the table, nicely arranged with all the mockery of dinner paraphernalia, were a variety of scents of every description, in bottles, and sachets, and prettily painted jars. Messrs. Delcroix must on that day have made a small fortune out of my wife's pin-money, and the display was far too *recherché* to be pleasant. Before ringing the bell and asking the servant what such a show meant, a stifled wicked laugh met my

ear, and in came my pretty wife, looking as demure as a mischievous kitten.

"If you please, dear Heliophilus," she said, "Miss Heliosweet from the Sun has called during your absence, so I have provided a dinner fitted for so *very* refined and particular a young lady."

Of course I scolded right well; but I must say, upon the subject of "Heliondé," Christabel is a perfect torment. Sometimes she smothers me with her pocket-handkerchief, on which some perfume has been poured; or at others, when my arm is hanging over a chair-back, she will slyly bring a magnifying glass, and, if I am sitting in the Sun, she gets a focus to bear upon my luckless hand, and when I start with the burn she tells me Heliosweet has sent me a kiss! Then, on some other occasion, when her lips are looking like rosebuds steeped in dew, and I attempt to press the darling girl to my heart, she starts away like a frightened fawn, and, mimicking Heliosweet's supposed tone of voice, declares that our minds

and spirits alone must mingle! She also alludes to the Princess Heliotrope in very disparaging terms, declaring she must have been like a Greek goddess, only very insipid; and says that Alûtedon was nothing better than a good-natured donkey! She declares, too, with most provoking truth, that the manner in which my solar bride left the Sun was precisely like the last scene of a ballet; and though, of course, I keep impressing upon her that the whole affair was a dream, she refuses to accept that position, but goes on pulling the *dramatis personæ* to pieces in a manner which makes me very nearly angry, and then laugh lustily.

Very adroitly, too, she has armed herself with the assertion of the Astronomer Bessel (as quoted in the preface), and whenever I defend what I conceive a fanciful and poetical description, a dialogue after the following manner is sure to ensue:

Christabel—Oh, yes, dear (this word was always emphatically pronounced when in a pouting mood respecting Heliosweet), that

is a very original idea, I dare say, but (quoting the aforesaid astronomer) one egg is very like another!

Benedict—But Christabel, you plague, your eggs, when broken up and dressed in different ways, at least form a variety of dishes. Now come, be honest, dear one; is not the character of Heliosweet removed from the sphere of common-place?

Christabel—Yes, certainly; but common-place is better than improbable erudition. Your bride was a horrid blue-stocking, and the "Sibyl's Glass," which is full of dreadful hard words, should have been sent to her instead of the poor sculptor, whom you mercilessly interrupted in his studio. Besides which, he told a great big story.

Benedict—Story!

Christabel—Yes, certainly; and so did Heliosweet.

Benedict—What do you mean?

Christabel—Why, did not they say that a sculptured figure, when perfectly executed, would appear to possess life?

Benedict—Well, it might be thus in the Sun.

Christabel—Even so, the assertion was useless in reference to events.

Benedict—Ah, Christabel, how dull you are! A little incoherence was needful in a dream, and any small discrepancy proved my artistic skill.

Christabel—Well, I never! That is a cool way of getting over difficulties. So, then, Mr. Heliophilus, all that's good in the book (if there is any) of course is owing to your talent; and all that's bad—which makes it four hundred pages—you place to the account of your skill in putting in flaws on purpose?

Benedict—Yes, dear, talent and skill are the exact words I like you to use, for they have produced an excellently bound and capitally printed book, and have gained a wonderful little volume of a wife, a fit type for all her sex, bound in the softest and most delicate skin, and upon which I have often printed many a——

Christabel (interrupting)—Hush!—you have only as yet read the preface; but certainly I never would have married you unless you had made Heliosweet change into Christabel. It was very sly, though, to think of a photographic likeness just at the close of the book.

Benedict—It was no doing of mine, and I think I now see Helio——

Christabel (again interrupting, rather petulantly)—I dare say you often fancy that, *dear*, but there is one question I desire to ask you, Mr. Heliophilus, which I think will puzzle you to answer—Are there any theatres in the Sun?

Benedict—Of course not, darling; in a world of tenuity like that of the Sun, ideas are too sublimated to bear the material accessories which the stage would impart to them.

Christabel—But then the actors would be proportionately refined.

Benedict—Ah, dear Christabel, I had no time to dream an encyclopædia!

Christabel—Then why not say you know nothing about it, sir? But tell me, have there been any imaginary voyages to other worlds written?

Benedict—Yes, a great number.[1] Shall I give you a list of them? for I have taken some trouble to hunt them out.

Christabel—No, thank you. Did their perusal induce your dream?

Benedict—Meaning, I suppose, have I stolen my ideas from them?

[1] The Panchàia of Euhemeros—Plato's Republic—Campanella's City of the Sun—Viage al Parnasso of Cervantes—Fielding's Journey from this World to the Next—the Utopia of Sir Thomas More—the New Atlantis of Lord Bacon—Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds—the Gaudentio di Lucca, attributed to Bishop Berkely—Cyrano Bergerac's Histoire Comique des Estats et Empires de la Lune, and Estats et Empires du Soleil—the Oceana of Harrington—Voltaire's Candide and Micromegas—the True History of Lucian—the Baron Munchausen's Adventures — Journey to the World Underground, by Nicolas Klimms—Relation d'un Voyage du Pole Arctique au Pole Antarctique, par le Centre du Monde—Relation du Monde de Mercure—Lamékis, ou les Voyages Extraordinaires d'un Egyptien dans la Terre Intérieure—Les Voyages de Milord Ceton dans les Sept Planètes—the Adventures of Peter Wilkins—Le Voyage Merveilleux du Prince Fan-Feredin dans la Romance—the Model Republic of Hippodamos, an architect of Miletos (an outline of which is preserved by Aristotle)—the Utopia described in an obscure fragment of Theopompos of Chios, as well as other selections which he published under the title of *θαυμασία*.

Christabel (slyly)—Oh, I wouldn't have asked such a question for all the world; but what a pity you did not steal from all!

Benedict (with raised bristles)—At least you, Christabel, would never have detected plagiarism?

Christabel—Thank you, dear. All I can say is, if *I* had written a journey to the Sun, I should have avoided the difficulty and danger of copying this world as Mr. Heliophilus has done in his dream.

Benedict—What a pity I forestalled you, darling, for then you might have written a book and won me for your husband!

Christabel—Impudence! But at least I would have made a stir.

Benedict—How so?

Christabel—Why, by describing the Sun as he really exists—a body of fire.

Benedict—Charming! And how would you proceed?

Christabel (her eyes sparkling with animation)—Oh, a veritable fire-king should govern a kingdom always in combustion—

a lurid red-hot monarch. His queen a paler flame. The people, fire of different colour. The language, rockets — words, squibs—and laughter, explosions. The cities as—asbes——

Benedict—Asbestine, dear.

Christabel—Yes, the cities asbestine, always on fire but never consumed—the food, coal—the drink, spirit like our own, which burns and destroys—the women's eyes, blue lights—the men's, Roman candles. Then the mountains should be sulphur—the oceans, bitumen—the seas, naphtha—the rivers, oil—the trees, resinous—the flowers, phosphorus—the soil, gunpowder—and the rain sparks, to descend and blow it all up!

Benedict (laughing heartily at the half-earnest tone of his pretty wife)—Well done, Christabel, and I have no doubt your explosion would have awakened you, as the cold aroused me.

Christabel—I dare say it might, and I suppose, when you became transfixed on your pedestal in the Sun, the truth is, you had an attack of cramp in the Doctor's gar-

den, and the cold that you suffered in space was the veritable cold of the evening air?

Benedict—Possibly, pert one, and my sleeping near a bed of heliotropes christened the Princess by that name; but you know you were charmed with the fact that love for a husband in the Sun increased personal beauty!

Christabel—Not at all, *dear;* because you see, if that were a rule here, I should soon become quite plain!

In short, my wife is as impertinent as she is pretty, and the only revenge I can take for her tricks and her criticism, is by seriously declaring my dream was no dream at all; but a *bonâ fide* reality, and that I am possessed of two wives in one, and that all the charming part of the delightful duality is due to Heliosweet, and every naughty, nonsensical way, is Christabel herself.

But with all this, however, the other day there was a very merry christening, and an infant with great blue eyes and a chubby and (at present) blank sort of face,

was called by her godfather and her godmother "Heliosweet;" so that, after all, my wife is very forgiving, nor does she in too severe a manner carry out her threats, that her spiritual self is alone mine by right of conquest and matrimony.

Notwithstanding all the ill-natured things she says of my book, she will not permit any one to abuse "Heliondé" save herself; and one day, happening to steal into her presence unawares, I found the dear child sobbing as if her poor little heart would break. I soon discovered that the cause of her grief was a criticism in "The Portico" (literary journal), in which "Heliondé" was cut up, "on principle." I had read it, and winced, and forgotten it some days past; but Christabel's soft skin being thinner than her husband's by many degrees, and, moreover, quite unused to the sort of castigation he received, took it so much to heart, that I am sure, if the learned Zoilus[1] could have seen her red eyes and

[1] A Thracian hyper-critic, hence the complacent use of the name here.

swollen cheeks, he would have made a recantation à la Zimmermann, and restored the dear thing to smiles and happiness. However, I consoled her, as best I could, thus:

Benedict—Christabel! pray, darling, leave off crying. Remember, as a literary man's wife, you will often have to share sorrows of this sort.

Christabel (between sobs)—The nas—ty—hor—rid man. I will go down to his office, that I will, and tell him that he (sobbing afresh) hasn't a—a—grain of fancy or imagination—in his—whole body.

Benedict—Christabel, darling, pray dry your tears——

Christabel (interrupting)—I won't dry them. I will cry if I like; he's a nasty—spite—ful——

Benedict—But, dear one, you yourself have often——

Christabel—Yes, I know; but—but I never really thought so. He doesn't—(sob)—understand you a bit. Oh, how I do—wish he was here!

At length I succeeded in pacifying her, and even, I believe, made her almost believe that genuine and judicious criticism is an excellent moral tonic, bracing up the intellectual system, and fitting it for fresh battles in the Republic of Letters.

While upon the subject of my wife, I must add, that nature, having endowed her mind with a considerable share of wit, and with it a dash—just a dash only—of satire, the chances are we shall continue a very happy couple, for I have observed that these piquant qualities in a woman preserve love very agreeably in a sort of moral citric acid.

At all events, I tell my darling Christabel she has no rival in *this* world, and if, when we quit it, some law of transition should allow us to abide in the city of the Sun, I am sure both Heliosweet and my wife will be excellent friends, more especially as a woman is always ready to relinquish the spiritual part of her spouse into good keeping, provided she be allowed to exercise a judicious and jealous guardianship over his more material conduct.

And now, dear reader, will you kindly exercise whatever philosophy the gods have given you, and make all due allowance for the many "Spots in the Sun!"

Will you also remember, when that luminary is bidding your flowers to bloom, the hay to scent the summer air, and your corn to wave in golden ripples over your fruitful fields in autumn time, that whilst he is thus conferring his inestimable favours, the slightest change in his disposition would, if a little too cold, render your world a lump of ice, or, if a little too hot, change it to a mass of carbon!

Will you also now believe, if only for the sake of Heliosweet, that at least some of the planets *are* inhabited, and that Kepler, Tycho Brahè, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Bentley, Fontenelle, Laplace, Sir William and Sir John Herschel, Huygens, Swedenborg, Arago, Dr. Chalmers, Isaac Taylor, Sir David Brewster, and numerous other astronomers are right, and that the author of the recent "Plurality of Worlds" may be possibly wrong!

Will you think sometimes, when the great orb refuses to shine on this English sky of ours, that he is otherwise engaged, attending to his own affairs; and will you then make excuses for him, and consider also, when he *does* shine, how generous he is to lavish his attention here, when so vast a system as his own lays equal claim to his kindness and care!

And will you—badinage apart—regard that sphere of gold balanced in the blue air as but a step, perhaps, to other worlds, through all of which, for what we know to the contrary, the spirit of man may have to pass ere he is in a condition to reach the "mansion" where dwelleth the

ETERNAL ONE!

THE END.